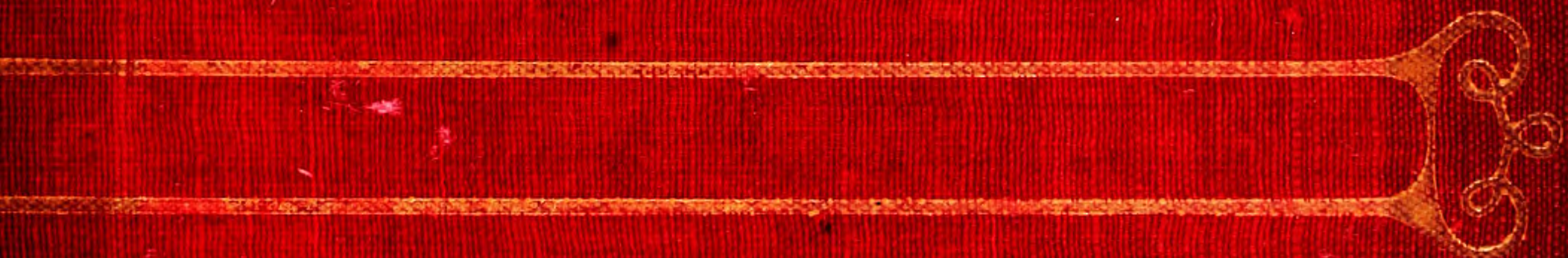
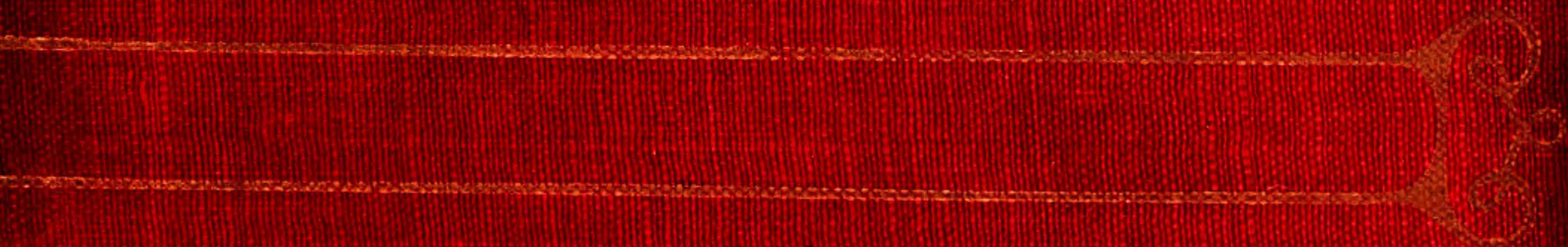


Arminée



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ARMINELL

A Social Romance

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "MEHALAH," "JOHN HERRING," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

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ARMINELL,

CHAPTER XIX.

LITTLE JOHN NOBODY.

GILES INGLETT SALTREN had promised his mother to say nothing to any one of what had been told him, but the temptation had come strongly upon him to tell Arminell that he was not the nobody she and others supposed, and he had succumbed in the temptation. He and the girl had interests in common, sympathies that drew them together, and he felt that it would be of extraordinary benefit to her, and a pleasure to himself, if, in that great house, where each was so solitary, they could meet without the barrier which had hitherto divided them and prevented the frank interchange of ideas and the communication of confidences. Later on in the even-

ing, it is true, that he felt some twinges of conscience, but they were easily stilled.

Jingles had greatly felt his loneliness. He had been without a friend, without even a companion. He could not associate with those of his mother's class, for he was separated from them by his education, and he made no friends in the superior class, from the suspicion with which he regarded its members. He had made acquaintances at college, but he could not ask them to stay at Chillacot when he was at the park, nor invite them as guests to Orleigh; consequently, these acquaintanceships died natural deaths. Nevertheless, that natural craving which exists in all hearts to have a familiar friend, a person with whom to associate and open the soul, was strong in Jingles.

If the reader has travelled in a foreign country—let us say in Bohemia—and is ignorant of the tongue, Czech, he has felt the irksomeness of a *table d'hôte* at which he has sat, and of which he has partaken, without being able to join in the general conversation. He has felt embarrassed, has longed for the

dinner to be over, that he might retire to his solitary chamber. Yet, when there, he wearies over his loneliness, and descends to the coffee-room, there to sip his *café noir*, and smoke, and pare his nails, and turn over a Czech newspaper, make up his accounts, then sip again, again turn over the paper, re-examine his nails, and recalculate his expenditure, in weariful iteration, and long for the time when he can call for his bill and leave. But, if some one at an adjoining table says, “Ach ! zu Englitsch !” how he leaps to eager dialogue, how he takes over his coffee-cup and cognac to the stranger’s table ; how he longs to hug the barbarian, who professes to “speaque a littelle Englitsch.” How he clings to him, forgives him his blunders, opens a thirsty ear to his jargon, forces on him champagne and cigars, forgets the clock, his nails, his notes, the bill and the train, in the delight of having met one with whom he can for a moment forget his isolation.

If this be so when meeting with a foreigner, how much more cordial is our encounter with a pleasant Englishman. We at once seek

out links of connection, to establish the fact of our having mutual acquaintances.

So did the impulse come on Saltren and overpower him. There was a community of ideas between him and Arminell ; and he was swept away by his desire to find a companion, into forgetfulness of the promise he had made to his mother.

That he was doing wrong in telling the girl a secret, about which he had no right to let a hint fall without her father's knowledge and consent could hardly be hid from his conscience, but he refused to listen, and excused himself on grounds satisfactory to his vanity. It was good for Arminell herself to know the relationship, that she might be able to lean on him without reserve. Giles Inglett Saltren had been very solitary in Orleigh. He had not, indeed, been debarred the use of his mother-tongue ; but he had been unable to give utterance to his thoughts ; and of what profit is the gift of speech to a man, if he may not speak out what is on his mind ? The young are possessed with eager desire to turn themselves inside out, and to show

very one their internal organisation. A olypus has the same peculiarity. It becomes weary of exposing one surface to the tide, and so frankly and capriciously inverts itself, so that what was coat of stomach becomes external tissue, and the outer skin accommodates itself to the exercise of digestive functions. Young people do the same, and do it publicly, in society, in a drawing-room, in unsympathetic company. As we grow older we acquire reserve, and gradually withdraw our contents within ourselves, and never dream of allowing any other surface to become exposed to the general eye, but that furnished us by nature as our proper external envelope.

The young tutor had his own crude, indigestible notions, a mind in ferment, and an inflamed and irritable internal tissue, and he naturally and eagerly embraced the only opportunity he had of inverting himself.

Then, again, a still mightier temptation operated on Jingles, the temptation which seduces every man to assume the rôle of somebody, who has been condemned to play

the part of nobody, when an opening is given.

There is a poem in Percy's Reliques, that represents the grievances of the common Englishman at the time of the Reformation, who dislikes the change that is going on about him, the introduction of novelties, the greed that masqueraded under the name of religion; and every verse ends with the burden, "But I am little John Nobody, and durst not speak."

Jingles had been unable to express his opinion, to appear to have any opinion at all; he had been in the house, at table, everywhere, a little John Nobody who durst not speak. Now the *rôle* of little John Nobody is a *rôle* distasteful to every one, especially to one who has a good opinion of himself. Imagine the emotions of an actor who has been doomed for years to be a walking gentleman, to whom has been suddenly offered the part of Hamlet. Would he not embrace the chance with avidity?

When Arminell approached Jingles with a not exactly, "Me speaque a littelle Englitsch!"

but with the confession that she understood his mind, and was asking of life the same questions that troubled him, then he warmed to her and longed for a closer intercourse. When, moreover, he found that it was possible for him to establish a tie of a close and binding nature between them, it was more than his moral courage could resist to break the seal of silence and tell her who he was.

But Jingles had entered into no particulars, and Arminell could not rest with the half-knowledge she possessed. She could not ask him to tell her more, nor could he explain the circumstances. She could not endure to be kept in partial ignorance, and immediately after breakfast, on the following morning, she went to Chillacot to see Mrs. Saltren.

The captain's wife was greatly alarmed when she heard what was wanted. Arminell spoke coldly, distantly, haughtily. Mr. Giles Inglett Saltren, she said, had let drop some words that implied a relationship. She must know whether there were any foundations for the implication. Mrs. Saltren trembled,

and made excuses, and attempted evasions ; but Arminell was determined to know the facts, and she forced the woman to repeat to her the story she had told on the previous night.

“ But, oh, miss ! I named no names ; and Giles never ought to have breathed a word about it. I will go down on my knees to you to beg you to say nothing to any one about this matter.”

“ Do you suppose it is a subject I am likely to discuss—to Mrs. Cribbage, for instance ? That I will talk freely of an affair which compromises the honour of my father ? ”

“ There is scarce any one knows about it.”

“ Except my father, yourself, and your son.”

“ And the captain ; but, miss, I beg you to bear witness that I named no names.”

“ I want to know no more, none of the details,” said Arminell, “ I only trust they may all be rolled up and cast away into oblivion.”

She returned to the park, went into the

music-room and began to practise on the piano. She was able to do the mechanical work and think at the same time. She believed the story she had been told, not so much because Marianne Saltren had related it, as because Jingles so confidently believed it. He would never have spoken to her on the matter had he harboured the slightest shadow of doubt.

But the story was one on which her mind must busy itself. She began unconsciously to play Agatha's song "Leise, leise," from "Der Freischütz," and as she played, two tears rolled down her cheeks.

She had always regarded her father with respect as a man of principle and strict notions of honour, though she did not consider him as a man of ability. Now he appeared to her in a light that showed him guilty of conduct unworthy of a gentleman, inexpressibly base and cowardly. His behaviour towards her own mother had been bad, for Arminell was satisfied that her mother would never have married Lord Lamerton had she been allowed to suspect

that his character was stained with such an ugly blur.

“ I am glad she died,” said the girl with a sob, and then with a start she asked, “ How was it that that woman was in the house with my mother ? How could she bear it ? No ; my dearest mother knew nothing, had no suspicions, and it was generous of Mrs. Saltren to be so near, and never let her suspect what had been done to her.”

She shook her head to shake out the conjectures that distressed her. It was a pity she did put these questions from her. Had she looked at them more closely she would have seen the incoherence in the story told her by Marianne. Then the same thought occurred to her which had presented itself to Jingles. Was it not possible that the marriage with the servant-maid had been a valid one, but that advantage had been taken of her ignorance to make her believe it was not, and so for Lord Lamerton to shake himself free from an encumbrance which had become irksome to him ? but if this were the case, her own mother's marriage would be of

questionable legality, and with it would go her own—Arminell's—legitimacy. A cold terror came over the girl at the thought. By all means Jingles must be induced to desist from investigating the matter and pressing his rights, if he had any. What a condition of affairs would ensue if the marriage of Marianne were a real one. Why the present Lady Lamerton would not be a proper wife, nor little Giles legitimate any more than herself.

Arminell was young, had no practical knowledge of the world, and her imagination had been fed by novels, not of the most wholesome quality. Such an incident, such a hideous entanglement involving so many was quite in accordance with romance, and the young are always expecting reality to take romantic lines, as the old are always mistrusting the romantic, as the garb of falsehood.

Arminell leaned her elbow on the music-stand, and her head in her palm. She felt faint and sick at the thought that had risen up in her.

At that precise moment Giles Inglett Saltren came into the room. He had heard the sound of the piano, and he knew that the girl spent an hour every morning in the music-room practising. She looked up, recovered her distracted thoughts, and resumed her mechanical play on the keys.

“Do you want to speak to me?” she asked, as he took his place beside the grand piano, ready to turn over the leaves of her exercises.

“Yes ; what are you playing?”

“I am practising, not playing anything of importance, anything consecutive, a reverie ; but one must hack every day, without it all execution goes out of the fingers. It is a pity that hacking with the tongue so many hours a day does not conduce to brilliancy of conversation.”

“I should like a few words with you.” said the tutor, “if you can spare me the time. I wish to express my regret for having spoken last night. I ought not to have revealed the secret of my birth ; but it was burning in my heart, and flamed out at my mouth.”

Arminell continued playing and said nothing.

“We must let the matter drop,” he said in a low tone, “I will not presume again, if you will endeavour to forget.”

“How can I forget? As well dash vitriol in my eyes, and say don’t allow them to smart.”

He saw that there were tears on her face.

“I am sincerely sorry,” he said, “I am heartily penitent. I see I have hurt you. My words were vitriol, and your eyes have overflowed.”

“Doubly do you hurt me now—in noticing what should have been left unobserved. I am crying over my dead respect for my father. I loved him in my own queer and wayward fashion, though there was little we had in common. I believed him to be upright and good, and now my faith is gone to pieces.”

“We must make allowances,” said Jingles. “This happened long ago—I am twenty-one—and Lord Lamerton was at the time young,

under thirty. In token of his regret he has done much for me."

"I have been accustomed," said Arminell, "to look up to my father, and I have been full of a certain family pride—not pride in rank and wealth and all that sort of thing, but pride in the honour and integrity which I believed had been ours always; and now I find—" she sobbed; she could not finish her sentence.

"I am very sorry. I shall ever reproach myself," was the impotent remark of Jingles, but he did feel a sting of self-reproach. He had acted cruelly to kill a girl's trust in her father.

"It cannot be helped," she said, "it is done. Well, I know all, my eyes are opened, I accept you as my half-brother. When my father married again he sacrificed half his fatherhood in me, or so I felt it; and now of that half that remained something has been taken from me. Very little of my dear papa remains now—only a shadow."

"And I," said Jingles, "I am even in a worse plight than you, for I can not love a

father who has so wronged my mother.” After a long pause, during which he held and fluttered a page of Arminell’s music, he added, “What a forlorn condition mine is. I am here by sufferance who ought to be here by right. Every one dins in my ears the great kindness which I have had shown me by his lordship, and yet I know that I am not receiving more than a fraction of the portion that should be mine. Her ladyship patronises me, Giles regards me as a hired tutor, the servants are barely civil, the guests either ignore me or cast gibes, as—” he checked himself; he was again recurring to the half-shaved French poodle, when in at the door, or French window that led from the terrace, came Lord Lamerton, fresh and cheery.

“Saltren,” he said, “you here! I am glad of that. The man I want; do me a favour, my good fellow, and be the go-between ’twixt your father and me. Arminell, have you seen Giles this morning? He is better, dear rascal, and quite bright. What, doing drill on the keys? Saltren, I hope

you will do your utmost endeavour with your father about his house. The company are in a quandary about it. We—I am a director, you know—we will give him a tip-top price, in fact, more than twice its value. The place is really not a pleasant one, and well deserves its chilly name. 'Pon my word I believe it was the cold and damp situation that sowed in you the seeds of pulmonary disease. I sent Macduff down, but he could effect nothing. I believe, on my very soul, that there is no man on earth but yourself who can move your father. He is a stubborn man, eh, Saltren? I would go myself and see him about it, but Macduff tells me your father is ruffled about the manganese. It is the deuce of a pity, but I cannot help myself. I wish he could be persuaded to sell. Why, Saltren, between you, me and the piano, I believe if I chose to dispute your father's right to Chillacot I could beat him. Macduff says that there has been some sort of acknowledgment made every year, there was no lease of any sort, and I am the lord of the manor—but I won't do that. I won't be

harsh or seem so, not only because I have the utmost respect for the captain, such a good and thoroughly upright man, but above all, because he is your father, my boy. However, my dear Saltren, something must be done, we are in a fix. The company will be put to the greatest possible inconvenience and much expense that might be avoided, if it has to carry the line below. Your father—”

“Seven,” muttered Jingles.

“I beg your pardon?” asked my lord, raising his eyebrows.

“Nothing, my lord,” answered the young man. “I had no intention to interrupt. I was counting.”

“Counting—oh, whilst my daughter played. She has given over strumming, so give over counting, please. You will do what I ask, will you not?”

“I will see him, my lord, as it is your pleasure.”

“Use all your powers of persuasion. Tell him that I want to cut a new road, to find employment for the men; and if the station

be at Chillacot, the road must go there. If your father—”

“Eight,” whispered Jingles as an aside, and looked at Arminell.

“If your father is reasonable, we will begin at once. You see how we are situated. I can understand his reluctance to quit a house where he was born, and for which he has done so much; but then, consider the price offered for it. This offer comes in most fitly now that the mine is abandoned. Your father—”

Again the tutor looked at Arminell.

“Your father must leave, as there is no work for him of the kind he is accustomed to, and a nice little capital would be very serviceable.”

“I will go, my lord, at once,” said Jingles.

“Thank you, Saltren, thank you. I have to be off to catch the 11.28 train.”

He went out of the room through the window by which he had entered.

“Did you hear?” asked the tutor, partly in scorn, partly in pain. “Nine times at the least did he speak of the manganese

captain as my father, although he knew perfectly all the while that I am not his son. Did you notice the pointed way in which he spoke? It was as though he suspected that I had got wind of the truth, and would emphatically let me understand that he would never, never acknowledge it, emphatically bid me consider the mining captain as my father. But"—his face darkened with anger—"I am by no means assured that we know the whole truth."

Arminell shuddered. Jingles looked intently at her, and saw that she divined his thoughts.

"No," said he calmly: "never fear that I will have the story published to the world. It would bring disgrace on too many persons. It would make my mother's position now as the wife of Captain Saltren an equivocal one. To disclose the truth, whatever complexion the truth might be found to wear when examined, would cause incalculable misery. What I shall do, whither I shall turn, I cannot yet tell."

Arminell also had noticed the manner in

which Lord Lamerton had spoken of the captain to the tutor as his father, and she also, with her preconceptions, thought it was pointedly so done.

“No,” said Jingles. “I shall have to leave this house, and I shall let his lordship know that I am not as blind as he would wish me to be. But what I shall do is as yet undetermined. I shall ask you to help me to come to a decision,”

CHAPTER XX.

HE BECOMES SOMEBODY.

ARMINELL kept to herself that day. At lunch she had not much to say to her step-mother, and Lord Lamerton was out. Giles came down, and his mother talked to him and to the tutor, and seemed not to observe Arminell's silence.

The girl was unhappy. She had given way to a momentary weakness, or wave of regret at the thought of her father's unworthiness, but the feeling predominating in her mind was indignation that her mother should have been left unacquainted with the previous conduct of my lord. She repeated to herself, "Most certainly she never knew it, or she would never have married him, even if she knew that ceremony was worthless that had been performed over him and Marianne."

Arminell had idealised her mother. The

girl had an affectionate heart, but she concentrated her affection on the memory of her mother. Ever since her father's re-marriage there had brooded over her a sense of wrong done to the memory of the mother. How could my lord, after having loved such a woman, take to himself his present wife?

Arminell was by no means easy in mind about Jingles' assurance that he would not speak. He had given the same assurance, as Mrs. Saltren had told her, to his mother, and had broken his promise. She resolved to exert her powers of persuasion on him to deepen this determination to be silent.

It was unfortunate that Lord Lamerton had not been able to cultivate more freely his daughter's society, but a nobleman has ten thousand calls on his time; he is prevented from living that close life of familiar association with his children which is the privilege of those in an inferior station. He considered, and he was right in considering, that his country, his order, and his county had claims on him which must not be put aside. He was a poor orator indeed, and rarely spoke in

the House, but he conscientiously voted with his party. In town he and Lady Lamerton saw a good deal of society, not because they cared particularly for it, but because they considered it a duty to entertain and keep up relations with friends and connexions. In the country Lord Lamerton, as Arminell contemptuously said, was kept on the gallop between school prize-givings, petty sessional meetings, quarter session, political and charitable institutions. He sat on boards, occupied chairs wherever there were boards and chairs placed for him. Moreover, at Orleigh, after the London season, the house was full of acquaintances, who came to shoot, hunt, drive, and be amused ; and, with a house full of guests, Lord Lamerton had not opportunity for cultivating the society of his daughter. But he was a man full of kindness, and he made many attempts to gain her affection, and persuade her to be to him the close companion that a daughter often is to a father. These attempts had failed, chiefly because of the resentment she bore him for having married again. Had he re-

mained a widower, and sought to associate her with him in his pursuits, it might have been otherwise ; but, as he had looked elsewhere for a companion, she closed her heart in reserve against him.

Lord Lamerton was fond of hunting, and in this Arminell did not accord with him. Her Girton governess had scoffed at those who had nothing better to do or think of than the pursuit, over hedge and gate, of a creature hardly bigger than a cat ; and the sneer had taken effect on the girl, and made her regard her father, because of his hunting, as somewhat grotesque and deficient in moral dignity. She could not accompany him when shooting, but she was out of sympathy with sport of this kind also. Her governess had spoken of those lords of creation who concentrated their vast intellects on the killing of a jack-snipe, and this remark stuck in her, as did the other about fox-hunting. She regarded sportsmen as fools, more or less. I once knew a man who had a mole with three white hairs growing out of it, on his nose ; and, when I talked with him, one hemisphere

of my brain was engaged in considering the mole, and asking how it came there—whether it had grown as he grew, or whether it had been of the same size when he was born, and whether his body had expanded and elongated about it; why he did not disguise it with chalk or violet powder, or else darken the three white hairs with antimony; whether he had consulted a surgeon concerning its removal, and, if so, why the surgeon had not removed it? Was it the cork plugging an artery, so that the man would bleed to death were it to be cut away? Why he, of all men, was afflicted with this mole—was it hereditary? And if so, on which side did it come to him, on the paternal or maternal? And if it were a hereditary mole, whether it would be possible, by judicious crossing, to reduce and finally extirpate it? Then again, whether after long disappearance, in say three generations, the mole would declare itself in the fourth? what the mole had to do with the doctrine of evolution? whether the Anthropological Society had considered this mole? and other questions. Afterwards I did not

know whether this man had blonde hair or swarthy, eyes brown or blue, an intellectual forehead or one retreating, nose aquiline, *rétroussé*, or sausage. Neither could I recall anything about his conversation—I could think of him only as the Man with the mole, or, to be more exact, as the Mole with the man.

Now, it sometimes happens that we see a blemish in a man's character, and that blemish entirely engrosses our attention, so that we cannot conceive of the man other than as the man with the blemish. He may have good, counterbalancing qualities, but of these we know nothing, we take no account, we see only the moral mole.

Moreover, this habit of seeing moles, and marking nothing but moles grows on us. I quite remember how that for a twelvemonth after I had talked with my gentleman with the mole, I examined the nose of every one I met, exploring it for moles, and expecting to find them hid under disguises, powdered or patched over ; or to discover traces of the amputation of moles, suspicious, tell-tale

scars, or else tokens that latent moles were on the eve of eruption, moles that had been hidden deep in the system, which were unsuspected by nearest and dearest, gradually, stealthily, inexorably working into publicity ; and I began to calculate how long it would be before the suspected mole came to light. And I became radically convinced that all men had moles in their constitution—that is, all men but myself—and that all men therefore were to be mistrusted, and held at arms' length, lest their moles should communicate themselves to us, after the manner of warts.

Arminell had not indeed reached this stage, but she was in that condition in which she saw the faults of her father and step-mother, and the faults only. Unable to forgive him his second marriage, she was predisposed to judge unfairly and harshly all he did, and all he left undone.

That one special reason for his remarriage was his desire to provide her with a step-mother, one who could guide and advise her, and counteract some of the mischief done by injudicious governesses, never

for a moment occurred to her, and yet this had been the predominant motive in the mind of Lord Lamerton when he chose Lady Julia Chesterton. She was a woman spoken of as clever and well-read, and kind-hearted. Clever, well-read, and kind-hearted he had found her, and yet deficient in the very quality necessary for commanding Arminell's respect, and that was decision. Lady Julia, whatever Arminell might think, was an able woman, but her promiscuous reading had sapped the foundations of all independence of mind that she ever possessed, and had acted on her brain, as acids on osseous matter—reducing it to jelly. She was ever building with head, and hands, and heart, an indefatigable builder, but always on no foundations at all, because she argued that solid rock was no where discoverable, and sand was liable to shift, therefore she would erect her structures in the air, on nothing.

Lord Lamerton had been disappointed at the result, but had no idea as to the cause of failure. And now, upon a mind in antagon-

ism, this disclosure made by Mrs. Saltren came, and brought Arminell's antagonism to a climax.

The tears which young Saltren had surprised were the sole tribute of her filial affection. When they were dried only hostility remained.

Some while ago, Messrs. Pears published an advertisement of their soap, on which were a green spot and another red, and the curious were invited to study one spot at a time, and then look at a blank wall. When this was done, he who had contemplated the red spot, saw a green disc dance before his eyes ; but if, on the other hand, he had looked long on the green spot, he saw before him only a red ball. It is so with a good many people ; and it was so with Arminell. Whenever Lord or Lady Lamerton wished her to see this or that, to take such a view of some particular matter, she invariably saw the complimentary colour, that is the reverse of what she was desired to see.

I, who write this, am ashamed to confess that I do the same, and I am not sure that,

occasionally, you, my dear reader, may also do the same—now and then, of course, only when the wind is easterly, and the liver is out of order, or the next morning after a ball. I know that when I have read the *Saturday Review*, I rise from the perusal believing in Mr. Gladstone and ready to follow him to the bottom of the Red Sea, or wherever else he desires to lead us; and that when I have read the *Pall-Mall Gazette*, I am eager to drive my wife and daughters into the Primrose League. Also, I am quite sure that when some person has been warmly lauded in your hearing, dear reader, you take a low view of that individual, and when another has been much disparaged, you take up the cudgels to defend him, though he or she is an absolute stranger to you, and one of whom you have never heard before. I never recommend a watering-place to my friend, sure, if he goes there, he will call it a beastly hole, or dissuade him from buying a horse, by detailing its faults, so certain am I that my words will make him purchase the brute.

In the afternoon of the same day, as the sun was warm, and the air was soft, Saltren took little Giles upon the terrace, and Arminell, who saw them from her window, descended, and joined them there. She was uneasy and impatient to know what the tutor intended doing. Would he come to a full understanding with Lord Lamerton, and would my lord agree to provide for him, if he would depart and keep the secret of his birth undisclosed? Or would Jingles in London discover sufficient to make him suspect that his mother's marriage was valid, and be carried away by ambition to establish his legitimacy at all costs to others?

At the same moment that Arminell came out on the terrace, the rector's wife, Mrs. Cribbage, drove up in her wickerwork pony-carriage, and entered the house to pay a visit to Lady Lamerton.

Giles ran off to see his rabbits, and Jingles was left alone walking with Arminell.

"I suppose you are not burdening Giles with many lessons, now that he is convalescent?" said the girl.

“No, her ladyship does not wish him to be pressed. He is still heavy in his head with cold.”

“Well,” said Arminell, “I did not come here to talk about Giles, so we will dismiss him from our conversation. I have been considering this miserable matter, and I want to know what action you purpose taking on it.”

“I also,” said the tutor, “have been revolving the matter in my head, and I have resolved to leave Orleigh as soon as possible, and to ask my uncle, Mr. James Welsh, my mother’s brother, to assist me to enter a literary career.”

“Literary career! in what branch?”

“I intend to write for the press, I mean for the papers. Mr. Welsh lives by his profession, and I will do the same.”

“That must be more interesting than teaching little boys Mensa—mensæ, Dominus—domini.”

“The press is the sceptre that now rules the world, and I will wield it.”

“Oh, how I envy you!” said Arminell.

“You are about to do something, something worth the labour, something the thought of which kindles ambition. You will escape out of this wearisome round of hum-drum into the world of heroic action. Here is my lord spending his life in petty duties as he regards them and has no result at the end to show ; my lady thinking, planning, executing, and also with no result appearing ; and I, wasting my time practising at the piano, running my voice over scales, doing a little sketching, reading odds and ends, picking flowers—and nothing can come of it all. We are made for more serious work.”

“I believe,” said Jingles, “that the writer of leaders exercises more power, because he appeals to a wider circle, than even the member of Parliament. One out of every twenty who takes up a paper, reads the speeches, but every one reads the leading articles. I believe that we stand at the beginning of a great social revolution, not in England only, but throughout the civilized world, and I have long desired to take part in it, I mean in directing it. I do not hold the extreme

opinions of some, but I have my opinions, no, that is not the word, convictions, bred in me by my perception of the inequalities, injustices, and unrealities of life as it is now organised."

"And you will work for your uncle?"

"I do not altogether hold with him," said Jingles. "He takes too commercial an aspect of the mission imposed on a man with his power and faculties for reaching the ear of the people."

"Do you intend to live with him?"

"I cannot tell. I have decided on nothing as to the particulars. I have sketched out the broad features of my future career."

"And,"—Arminell's voice faltered—"my father?"

"I will write to him after I am in town, informing him that I know all, and that, therefore, it was not possible for me, with self-respect, to remain in his house."

Arminell looked down on the gravel.

"You will not go into this matter, not have my mother's name brought in question?"

“ I will do nothing that can cause you a moment’s pain,” answered Jingles patronisingly.

“ I shall be very solitary,” she said. “ More so than before. With you I can talk about matters of real interest, matters above the twaddle of common talk—Yes ? ”

This was addressed to the footman who appeared on the terrace and approached.

“ What is it, Matthews ? ”

“ My lady says, miss, that she will be glad if you could make it convenient to step into the parlour.”

“ There,” said Arminell, when Matthews had withdrawn. “ So she stands between me and the light at all times. I shall be back directly. She wants me about the choice of some new patterns for covering the sofas and chairs, I dare say. Here comes Giles from his rabbits.”

Arminell walked slowly to the drawing-room, with a frown of vexation on her brow. She never responded with alacrity to her step-mother’s calls.

Mrs. Cribbage, the rector’s wife, saw at

once that Arminell was in a bad humour, as she entered the room.

“I am so sorry to interrupt you,” she said. “It was my doing. Lady Lamerton and I were speaking about old Samuel Ceely, and I have just heard how you have interested yourself about him.”

“I sent to ask you to come, dear,” said Lady Lamerton in her sweet, gentle tones, “because Mrs. Cribbage has been telling me about the man. He is unobjectionable now, but he was a bit of a rake once.”

“He was a gamekeeper to the late Lord Lamerton, and to the dowager,” put in Mrs. Cribbage, “and was dismissed. I could find out all the particulars. I believe he sold the game, and besides, was esteemed not to have the best moral character. However, I know no particulars. I will now make a duty of enquiring, and finding them out. Of late years—except for snaring rabbits and laying night-lines—I believe he has been inoffensive.”

“We are all miserable sinners,” said Arminell, “we were told so on Sunday——”

“You were not at church on Sunday,” interrupted Mrs. Cribbage.

“And,” continued Arminell, “it is really satisfactory to know that poor Ceely is not an exception to that all-embracing rule, and that he has not the moral perfection which would make up for his physical short-comings.”

Arminell could not endure the rector’s wife, and took no pains to disguise her feelings. Lady Lamerton likewise disliked her, but was too sweet and ladylike to show it.

Mrs. Cribbage was an indefatigable parish visitor. She worked the parish with the most conscientious ardour, considering a week lost unless she had visited every house in it and had dispensed a few pious scriptural remarks, and picked up a pinch of gossip in each. She knew everything about every one in the place, and retailed what she knew, especially if it were too unpleasant to retain. She did not give out much scandal in the cottages, but she pecked here and there after grains of information, and swallowed what she found. And the people, well aware of her liking, with that courtesy and readiness

to oblige which characterises the English lower orders, brought out and strewed before her all the nasty, and ill-natured, and suspicious scraps of information they had hoarded in their houses. Mrs. Cribbage carried away whatever she learned, and communicated it to her acquaintances in a circle superior to that where she gathered it, to the Macduffs, to the wives of the neighbouring parsons, to the curate, with caution to Lady Lamerton. She acted as a turbine wheel that forces water up from a low level to houses on a height. She thus impelled a current of tittle-tattle from the deep places of society to those who lived above ; but in this particular she differed from the turbine, that forces up clean water, whereas, what Mrs. Cribbage pumped up was usually the reverse.

Mrs. Cribbage was nettled by Arminell's uncourteous tone, and said : " What charming weather we have been having. I hope, Miss Inglett, that you enjoyed your Sunday morning walk ? "

" It was as delightful as the weather," answered Arminell, well aware that there were

claws in the velvet paw that stroked her. "Would you wish to know where I went?"

"O, my dear Miss Inglett! I know."

Then Mrs. Cribbage left, and when she was gone, Lady Lamerton said gently, "You were too curt with that woman, dear. You should never forget your manners, never be rude to a visitor in your own house."

"I am not an adept at concealment, as are others."

"The best screen against such a person is politeness."

"She is like a snail, with eyes that she stretches forth to all parts of the parish. I hate her."

"Arminell, your father has been putting prickly wire about on fences where cattle or pigs force their way. The beasts scratch themselves against the spikes, and after one or two experiences, learn to keep within bounds, and lose the desire to transgress. The Mrs. Cribbages—and there are yards of them—are the spiky wires of society, hedging us about, and keeping us in our proper

places, odious in themselves, but useful, and a protection to us against ourselves."

"Barbed or unbarbed, I would break through them."

"No, my dear, you would only tear yourself to pieces on them, without hurting them; they are galvanised, plated, incapable of feeling, but they can inflict, and it is their mission to inflict an incredible amount of pain. You have already committed an indiscretion, and the crooked spike of the Cribbage tongue has caught you. Instead of going to church on Sunday morning, you walked in the road with Mr. Saltren. Of course, this was an act of mere thoughtlessness, but so is the first plunge of the calf against the prickly wire. Be more judicious, dear Armie, in the future. Where were you on Sunday afternoon?"

"Sitting with Giles and Mr. Saltren," said Arminell, furious with anger and resentment, "talking Sabbath talk. We discussed Noah's ark."

"And this morning he went into the music-room to you. Your father told me he

found him there turning over the leaves of your music, and counting time for you ; and now Mrs. Cribbage arrives and sees you walking with him on the terrace. My dear Armie, Jingles is a nobody, and these nobodies are just those whom it is unsafe to trifle with. They so speedily lose their balance, and presume."

"Mr. Saltren is not such a nobody as you suppose," answered Arminell. "He is a man of ability and independence of thought, he is one who will before long prove himself to be a somebody, indeed."

"My dear, he is a somebody already who has established himself as a nuisance."

CHAPTER XXI.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

So, now, even this was denied Arminell, to talk with a rational man, the only rational man in the house, about the subjects that interested her. She must keep Mrs. Cribbage before her eyes, ever walk in daily fear of Mrs. Cribbage ; consider, before she did anything she liked, what would Mrs. Cribbage's construction on it be. The opinion of Mrs. Cribbage was to be what she must strive to conciliate. All principle must be subordinated to the judgment of Mrs. Cribbage, all independence sacrificed to her.

It is one of those pleasant delusions under which we live in England, that we have only God and the Queen to look up to and obey. As a matter of fact Mrs. Cribbage is absolute in heaven and earth, and the Divine law has no force, unless subscribed by Mrs.

Cribbage. We fear God, because Mrs. Cribbage is His vicegerent, and has the triple crown and power of the keys, and in addition bears the sword. Resistance is powerless before the all-reaching power of Mrs. Cribbage. The Holy Vehm was nothing in its might to the judgment of Mrs. Cribbage. Her ministers are everywhere executing her orders, and none of the condemned dare to remonstrate, or attempt escape. We may utter with impunity treasonable words against the Queen, and profess agnosticism towards God, but no one disputes the existence of Mrs. Cribbage and would not lick the dust under her feet.

No one loves this autocrat, but there is not a Nihilist in her realm.

Lady Lamerton had likened her to American barbed wire, and those who have dealings with Mrs. Cribbage touch her as I have seen porters handle a roll of spiked wire deposited on the railway platform, with caution, and impatience to consign it to its proper destination. And yet, though every one dreads, and some positively loathe Mrs.

Cribbage, yet all agree that it would not be possible to live without her. She keeps society together as a paperweight compacts all kinds of scraps of correspondence, and bills and notices.

As long as young girls are in the nursery, and subject to governesses, they look forward to their coming out as to a time of emancipation. They have not reckoned on Mrs. Cribbage, who, as with a whoop they burst out of the school-room, confronts them and blocks their road.

Arminell had done with her schooling, and properly ought to have come out that year, but the event had been postponed, as Lord Lamerton did not wish to go to town that year. She was free from governesses, and by no means inclined to lay her neck under the wheels of Mrs. Cribbage's car. When my lord and my lady had gone to town during the season, Arminell and Giles had not attended them. Giles was better in health in the country, with his pony, and his cricket, that is, with the tutor bowling to him, and the coachman's son acting as long-stop ;

accordingly, he was left at Orleigh to his great delight, and Arminell was left as well, with the governess, to continue her lessons, till she put off governesses and other childish things. Arminell had not therefore been brought much in contact with the world, and did not know the force of public opinion, she no more considered it than she considered the pressure of the atmosphere. According to our best authorities, we are subjected to the weight of fifteen pounds to each square-inch of surface, and a man of ordinary size sustains a pressure on him of some thirty-thousand pounds of air. I am a man of ordinary size, but I no more knew that I laboured under the burden of thirty-thousand pounds than I did that I was subjected to the pressure of about the same burden of Mrs. Cribbage who sits on my shoulders all day and squats on my chest all night, till I turned up the matter in an encyclopædia. We no more think about the pressure of public opinion, I say, than we do about the pressure of the atmosphere. We make allowance for it, in all we undertake.

If we ascend great heights we suffer because we are no longer subjected to the pressure ; our noses bleed, our breath comes short ; and if, by any chance, we get out of the region where public opinion weighs, we become alarmed, uneasy, gasp, and cry out to be brought back under its incubus once more.

When Arminell had left the room, and closed the door behind her, she stood for a minute, resting the fingers of her left hand on the lock.

Should she obey her step-mother or defy her ? She had promised young Saltren to return to the terrace. She wanted to have further talk with him. Why should she submit to the dictation of Lady Lamerton who was influenced by the hints of that detestable Mrs. Cribbage ? If Lady Lamerton were allowed her own way in small matters, she would presume to dictate in those which were large, and Arminell would be allowed no will of her own. In her heart, the girl admitted that her step-mother had reason to reproach her. If Jingles were only the

tutor, and the son of the mining captain, he was, as my lady said, a nobody, and it was unbecoming for her to frequent his society. Indeed, it was hardly decorous for her to be so much with him, were he any thing else but what she knew him to be, her brother. The possession of the knowledge of their relationship altered the aspect of her conduct radically, and justified it. Lady Lamerton, in her ignorance, interfered, and might be excused interfering, but she, Arminell, being better informed, was at liberty to act differently from what my lady advised. The young man was her brother, and what more delightful intercourse than that which subsists between brother and sister, when like-minded? There had taken place no open rupture between her ladyship and Arminell as yet; but it was inevitable that one would come, and that shortly; perhaps, the girl argued, the sooner the better, that her step-mother might be made clearly to understand that she—Arminell, stood on her independence.

The girl let go the handle of the drawing-

room door, and with beating heart and heaving bosom, went deliberately out on the terrace and resumed her place at the side of Jingles.

“ I have come,” she said, “ as I undertook. My lady has read me a lecture.”

“ About what ? ”

“ About barbed wire, about Mrs. Cribbage. That creature saw me walking with you, and remonstrated with mamma, I mean my step-mother, and my lady retailed the remonstrance, as in duty bound ; I am forsooth to be placed under Mrs. Cribbage, to have my feet strapped, compressed and distorted, like those of a Chinese lady, till I am unable to walk alone, and must lean on the shoulders of the Cribbage and my lady. This sort of thing is intolerable to me. Oh, that I were a man, that I might run away, as you are going to do, and stamp, and stride, and dance, and use every muscle in my feet freely. I detest this strapping and pinching and crippling.”

“ I have felt the same,” said the young man. “ And it has become unendurable to

me. One must either submit or break away. The process must end in irremediable distortion, and fatal deprivation of the power of walking independently. Your whole future, your character for good or evil, depends on your conduct now. If you fall back in your chair unable to resist——”

“No, I will kick and kick, I will not be disabled from walking.”

“If you make a brief attempt to resist, and do not maintain a stubborn and determined resistance, you will be cramped and crippled for life. As you put it, the whole social system of the upper classes is Chinese bandaging of the feet; not only so, but it is Indian flattening of the skull. I have felt, and so have you, that in this house our heads are strapped between boards to give them the requisite shape, and our brains to be not allowed to exceed the requisite measure.”

“What can I do? I have no one but yourself to advise me.”

“It will be impossible for you to escape the influences brought to bear on you, if you remain here; the Cribbages, great and small,

will lie in wait till you are napping and then fall on you and bind you, and apply the laces to your feet, and the boards to your head."

"But, whither could I go?" Arminell asked. She thought for a moment, and then said, "If I went to my Aunt Hermione, it would be going from beneath the shower under the shoot. There never was a more formal, society-laced creature in the whole world than my aunt, Lady Hermione Flathead. Everything in her house, her talk, her manners, her mind, her piety, everything about her is conventional."

Lady Lamerton approached, with little spots of colour in her cheeks, holding a parasol.

"My dear Arminell," she said, "how can you be so inconsiderate as to come out without a sunshade?"

"You see," said Arminell, turning contemptuously away and addressing the tutor; "everything is to order. I may not even take two steps without a parasol, in fine weather; and in bad, without an umbrella. The hand must never be free."

“I think, Mr. Saltren,” said Lady Lamerton, “that it would be well if Giles went indoors, and, now that he is better, learnt a little Latin.”

“As your ladyship desires it, certainly,” answered the tutor.

“I am so glad, my dear,” said Lady Lamerton, “that you have waited for me on the terrace. I am sorry to have detained you one minute, but I was looking out the address of those Straceys. I will take your arm and we will look at the pansies.”

“Step-mothers, the Germans call them,” said Arminell. “I do not admire pansies.”

“We call them pansies, from *pensée*, dear, which means thought, kind thought, and forethought, which possibly, though not always acknowledged, is to be found in step-mothers.”

Arminell tossed her head.

“The homely name for these same flowers,” continued Lady Lamerton, “is hearts-ease, and I’m sure it is a misnomer, if hearts-ease be the equivalent for step-mother, especially when she has to do with a wayward step-daughter.”

“ I think that step-mothers would find most hearts-ease, if they would turn their activity away from their step-daughters, and leave them alone.”

“ My conscience will not suffer me to do this,” answered Lady Lamerton without losing her temper. “ You may not acknowledge my authority, and you may hold cheap my intellectual powers and acquirements, but, after all, Armie, I *am* in authority, and I do not think I am quite a fool. I can, and I must, warn you against dashing yourself against the barbed wire. My dear, if we would listen to others, we would save ourselves many a tear and bitter experience. I love you too well, and your dear father too well, to leave you uncautioned when I see you doing what is foolish and dangerous.”

“ But do you not know that experience is the one thing that must be bought, and cannot be accepted as a gift ? ”

“ I beg your pardon. Our whole system of social culture is built upon experience accepted and not bought. It is not the

Catholics alone who hold by tradition, we all do it, or are barbarians. Progress without it is impracticable. We start from the accumulated experience of the past, handed on to us by the traditions of our fathers. If everyone began by rejecting the acquisitions of the past, advance would be limited to the term of man's natural life, for everyone would begin from the beginning ; whereas, each generation now starts where the last generation left off. It is like the hill of Hissarlik where there are cities superposed the one on the other, and each is an advance culturally and artistically on that below—above the Greek Ilium, below the Homeric Troy, under that the primeval hovel of the flint-chipper."

"Each on the ruins of the other."

"Each using up the material of the other, following the acquisitions of the earlier builders and pushing further on to structural perfection."

"That may be true of material process," said Arminell, "but, morally, it is not true. Besides, our forefathers made blunders. I

have been speaking with Mr. Saltren about the Flatheads and the Chinese who compress the heads and double up the feet of children. But our ancestors were nearly as stupid. Look at the monument of the first Lord Lamerton in the church. See the swaddled babies represented on it, cross-gartered like Malvolio. Now we give freedom to our babies, let them stretch, and scramble, and sprawl. But you old ladies still treat us young girls as your great-grandmothers treated their babies. You swaddle us, and keep us swaddled all our life long. No wonder we resent it. The babies got emancipated, and so will we. I have heard both papa and you say that when you were children you were not allowed to draw nearer the fire than the margin of the rug. Was there sense in that? Was the fire lighted to radiate its heat over an area circumscribed by the mat, and that the little prim mortals with blue noses and frosty fingers must shiver beyond the range of its warmth? We do not see it. We will step across the rug, and if we are cold, step inside the fender."

“And set fire to your skirts?”

“We will go for warmth where it is to be found, and not keep aloof from it because of the vain traditions of the elders.”

Lady Lamerton sighed.

“Well, dear,” she said, “we will not argue the matter. To shift the subject, I hardly think it was showing much good feeling in you to come straight out here after I had expressed my wish that you would not. It was not what I may term—pretty.”

“I had promised Mr. Saltren to return to him and resume the thread of our interrupted conversation. Why did you send for me about old Ceely’s past history, as if I cared a straw for that?”

“I sent for you, Armie, because you were walking with the tutor, and Mrs. Cribbage had observed it. She told me, also, that you had been seen with him when you ought to have been at church.”

“Well?”

“It was injudicious. She also said that you had been observed walking in the avenue last night with a gentleman; but I

was able to assure her that the gentleman was your father."

"This espionage is insufferable," interrupted Arminell.

"I allow it is unpleasant, but we must be careful to give no occasion for ill-natured remark."

"I can not. I will not be swaddled and have my feet crippled, and my head compressed, and then like a Chinese lady ask to be helped about by you and Mrs. Cribbage."

"Better that than by any one you may pick up."

"I do not ask to be helped about by any one I may pick up. Besides, Mr. Saltren was not picked up by me, but by my father. He introduced him to the house, gave him to be the guide and companion of Giles, and therefore I cannot see why I may not cultivate his acquaintance, and, if I see fit, lean on him. I will not be swaddled, and passed about from arm to arm—baby eternal!"

CHAPTER XXII.

TOO LATE.

LADY LAMERTON said no more to Arminell, but waited till the return of his lordship, before dinner, and spoke to him on the matter.

She was aware that any further exertion of authority would lead to no good. She was a kind woman who laboured to be on excellent terms with everybody and who had disciplined herself to the perpetual bearing of olive branches. She had done her utmost to gain Arminell's goodwill, but had gone the wrong way to work. She had made concession after concession, and this made her step-daughter regard her as wanting in spirit, and the grey foliage of Lady Lamerton's olive boughs had become weariful in the eyes of the girl.

If my lady had taken a firm course from the first and had held consistently to it,

Arminell might have disliked her, but would not have despised her. It does not succeed to buy off barbarians. Moreover, Arminell misconstrued her step-mother's motives. She thought that my lady's peace pledges were sham, that she endeavoured to beguile her into confidence, in order that she might establish a despotic authority over her.

“ I do not know what to do with Armie ! ” sighed Lady Lamerton. “ We have had a passage of arms to-day and she has shaken her glove in my face. Another word from me, and she would have thrown it at my feet.”

She said no more, as she was afraid of saying too much, and she waited for her husband to speak. But, as he offered no remark, but looked annoyed, she continued, “ I am sorry to speak to you. I know that I am in fault. I ought to have won her heart and with it her cheerful respect, but I have not. It is now too late for me to alter my conduct. Arminell was a girl of sense when I came here, and it really seems disgraceful that at my age I should have been unable to win the

child, or master her. But I have failed, and I acknowledge the failure frankly, without knowing what to suggest as a remedy to the mischief done. I accept all the blame you may be inclined to lay on me—”

Lord Lamerton went up to his wife, took her face between his hands and kissed her.

“Little woman, I lay no blame on you.”

“Well, dear, then I do on myself. I told you last night how I accounted for it. One can look back and see one’s faults, but looking forward one is still in ignorance what road to pursue. It really seems to me, Lamerton, that on life’s way all the direction posts are painted so as to show us where we have diverged from the right way and not whither we are to go.”

“Julia, I exercise as little control over Armie as yourself. It is a painful confession for a father to make, that he has not won the respect of his child—of his daughter, I mean; as for Giles—dear monkey—” his voice softened and had a slight shake in it.

“And I am sure,” said Lady Lamerton, putting her arms round his neck, and drawing

his fresh red cheek to her lips, "that there is nothing, nothing whatever in you to make her lack the proper regard."

"I will tell you what it is," said Lord Lamerton, "Armie is young and believes in heroes. We are both of us too ordinary in our ways, in our ideas, in our submission to the social laws, in our arm-in-arm plod along the road of duty, to satisfy her. She wants some one with great ideas to guide her; with high-flown sentiment; to such an one alone will she look up. She is young, this will wear off, and she will sober down and come to regard hum-drum life with respect."

"In the meantime much folly may be perpetrated," said Lady Lamerton sadly. "Do look how much has been spent in the restoration of Orleigh. You have undone all that your grandfather had done. He overlaid the stone with stucco, and knocked out the mullions of the windows for the insertion of sashes, and painted over drab all the oak that was not cut away. So are we in later years restoring the mistakes made in ourselves, perhaps by our parents in our bring-

ing up, but certainly, also, by our own folly and bad taste in youth. And well for us if there is still solid stone to be cleared of plaster, and rich old oak to be cleared of the paint that obscures it. What I dread is lest the iconoclastic spirit should be so strong in the girl that she may hack and tear down in her violent passion for change what can never be recovered and re-erected."

"She is not without principle."

"She mistakes her caprices for principles. Her own will is the ruling motive of all her actions, she has no external canon to which she regulates her actions and submits her will."

"What caprice has she got now?"

"She has taken a violent fancy to the society of young Saltren."

"Oh! he is harmless."

"I am not so certain of that. He is morbid and discontented."

"Discontented! About what? Faith—he must be hard to please then. Everything has been done for him that could be done."

"Possibly for that reason he is discontented.

Some men like to make their own fortunes, not to have them made for them. You have, in my opinion, done too much for the young fellow."

"He was consumptive and would certainly have died, had I not sent him abroad."

"Yes—but after that?"

"Then he was unfit for manual labour, and he was an intelligent lad, refined, and delicate still. So I had him educated."

"Are you sure he is grateful for what you have done for him?"

Lord Lamerton shrugged his shoulders. "I never gave a thought to that. I suppose so."

"I am not sure that he is. Look at children, they accept as their due everything given them, all care shown them, and pay no regard to the sacrifices made for them. There is no conscious gratitude in children. I should not be surprised if it were the same with young Saltren. I do not altogether trust him. There is something in him I do not like. He does his duty by Giles. He is respectful to you and me—and yet—I have no confidence in him."

“ Julia,” said Lord Lamerton with a laugh. ‘I know what it is, you mistrust him because he is not a gentleman by birth.’”

“ Not at all,” answered his wife, warmly. “ Though I grant that there is a better guarantee for a man of birth conducting himself properly in a place of trust, because he has deposited such stakes. Even if he have not principle in himself, he will not act as if he had none, for fear of losing caste. Whereas one with no connections about him to hold him in check will only act aright if he have principle. But we have gone from our topic, which was, not Jingles, but Arminell. I want to speak about her, and about him only so far as he influences her for good or bad. I will tell you my cause of uneasiness.”

Then she related to her husband what she knew about the Sunday walk in the morning, and the Sunday talk in the afternoon, and the music-room meeting on the following morning.

“ Oh !” said his lordship, “ he only went there to turn over the pages of her music.”

“ You see nothing in that ? ”

“ ’Pon my soul, no.”

“ Then I must tell you about her conduct this afternoon, when she disobeyed me in a marked, and—I am sorry to use the expression—offensive manner.”

“ That I will not tolerate. I can not suffer her to be insolent to you.”

“ For pity’s sake do not interfere. You will make matters worse. She will hate me for having informed you of what occurred. No—take some other course.”

“ What course ? ”

“ Will it not be well to get rid of Saltren ? And till he has departed, let Arminell go to Lady Hermione Woodhead.”

Within parenthesis be it said that Woodhead was Aunt Hermione’s real name, only in scorn, and to signify her contraction of mind, had Arminell called her Flathead, after the tribe of Indians which affects the compression of infants’ skulls.

“ I cannot dismiss him at a moment’s notice, like a servant who has misconducted himself. I’ll be bound it is not his fault—it is Armie’s.”

“ Let Arminell go to her aunt’s at once.”

“ By all means. I’ll have a talk with Saltren.”

“ Not a word about Arminell to him.”

“ Of course not, Julia. Now, my dear, it is time for me to dress for dinner.”

Dinner passed with restraint on all sides. Lord Lamerton was uncomfortable because he felt he must speak to Arminell, and must give his *congé* to the tutor. Arminell was in an irritable frame of mind, suspecting that something was brewing, and Lady Lamerton was uneasy because she saw that her husband was disturbed in his usually placid manner.

After dinner, Lord Lamerton said to his daughter as she was leaving the room, “ Armie, dear, are you going into the avenue ? If so, I shall be glad of your company, as I intend to go there with a cigar presently.”

“ If you wish it, papa ; but—Mrs. Cribbage heard that you and I had been walking there last night, and it meets with her disapproval. May James first run to the rectory with our compliments and ask Mrs. Cribbage’s kind permission ? ”

She looked, as she spoke, at her step-mother, and there was defiance in her eye.

“Nonsense, dear,” said her father. “I shall be out there in ten minutes. Will you have a whitewash, Saltren, and then I will leave for my cigar? You are not much of a wine-drinker. I am glad, however, you are not a teetotaller like your father.”

Again a reference to the captain. Jingles looked towards the door, and caught Arminell’s eye as she went through. She also had heard the reference, and understood it, as did the tutor. Certainly his lordship was very determined to have the past buried, and to refuse all paternity in the young fellow.

“Very well,” said the girl to herself, “I will let my father understand that I know more than he supposes. He has no right to shelve his responsibilities. If a man has done wrong, let him be manful, and bear the consequences. I would do so. I would be ashamed not to do so.”

She set her teeth, and her step was firm. She threw a light shawl over her head and shoulders and went into the avenue, where

she paced with a rebellious, beating heart a few minutes alone, till her father joined her.

“ I know, papa, what you want ; or rather what you have been driven to. My lady has been peaching of me, and has constituted you her executioner.”

“ Arminell, I dislike this tone. You forget that courtesy which is due to a father.”

“ Exacted of a father,” corrected the girl.

“ And due to him as a father,” said Lord Lamerton, gravely. His cigar was out. He struck a fusee and lighted it again. His hand was not steady, Arminell looked in his face, illumined by the fusee, and her heart relented. That was a good, kind face, a guileless face, very honest, and she could see by the flare of the match that it was troubled. But her perverse mood gained the upper hand again in a moment. She possessed the feminine instinct in dealing with men, when threatened, to attack, not wait to be attacked.

“ I do not think it fair, papa, that my lady should hide herself behind you, and thrust

you forward, as besiegers attack a fortress, from behind a screen."

"You are utterly mistaken, Arminell, if you imagine that your mother—your step-mother—has intentions of attacking you. Her heart overflows with kindness towards you, the warmest kindness."

"Papa, when Vesuvius is in eruption, the villagers in proximity pray to heaven to divert into the sea, anywhere but towards them, the warm gush of incandescent lava."

"Arminell," said her father, "you pain me inexpressibly. I suppose that it is inevitable that a daughter by a first wife should not agree thoroughly with her father's second choice ; but, 'pon my soul, I can see no occasion for you to take up arms against your step-mother, she has been too forbearing with you. She is the kindest, most considerate and conscientious of women."

"You may spare me the enumeration of her good qualities, papa ; I am sure she is a paragon in your eyes, and I would not disturb the happy conviction. I suppose mar-

riage is much like the transfusion of blood practised by the *rénaissance* physicians. An injection of rabbit's blood into the arm of a turbulent man made him sensible to fear, and one of lion's blood into the arteries of a coward infused heroism into his soul. When there was an interchange of blood between two individuals they came to think alike, feel alike, and act alike ; it is a happy condition. But as there has been no infusion of my lady's blood into me—I think and feel and act quite differently from her.”

“ We will leave her out of the question,” said Lord Lamerton, dropping his daughter's arm which at first he had taken affectionately. “ Confound it, my cigar is out again, the tobacco must be bad. I will not trouble to relight it.”

“ By all means let us leave my lady out of the question,” said Arminell. “ I suppose I am not to be court-martialed for having discussed Noah's Ark on Sunday with the tutor. I assure you we did not question the universality of the Flood, we talked only of the packing of the animals in the Ark.”

“ Was there any necessity for Mr. Saltren to come to you in the music-room ? ”

“ No necessity whatever. He came for the pleasure of talking to me, not even to turn over my music leaves. ”

“ You must not forget, my dear, who he is. ”

“ I do not, I assure you, papa, it is precisely *that* which makes me take such an interest in him. ”

“ Well, my dear, I am glad of that ; but you must not allow him to forget what is due to you. It will not do for you to encourage him. He is only a mining captain’s son. ”

“ Papa, ” said Arminell, slowly and emphatically, “ I know very well whose son he is. ”

“ Of course you do ; all I say is, do not forget it. He is a nice fellow, has plenty of brains, and knows his place. ”

“ Yes, papa, ” said Arminell, “ he knows his place, and he knows how equivocal that place is. He is regarded as one thing, and he *is* another. ”

“ I daresay I made a mistake in bringing him here so near to his father. ”

“So very near to his father, and yet so separated from him.”

“I suppose so,” said Lord Lamerton, “education does separate.”

“It separates so widely that those who are divided by it hardly regard each other as belonging to the same human family.”

“I daresay it is so ; the miners cannot judge me fairly about the manganese, because we stand on different educational levels.”

“It is not only those beneath the line who misjudge those above ; it is sometimes the superiors who misunderstand those below.”

“Very possibly ; but, my dear, that lower class, with limited culture and narrow views, is nowadays the dominating class. It is, in fact, the privileged class, it pays no taxes, and yet elects our rulers ; our class is politically swamped, we exist upon sufferance. Formerly the castle dominated the cottage, but now the cottages command the castle. We, the educated, and wealthy are maintained as parochial cows, to furnish the parishioners with milk, and when we run dry are cut up

to be eaten, and our bones treated with sulphuric acid and given to the earth to dress it for mangel-wurzel."

Arminell was vexed at the crafty way in which, according to her view, her father shifted ground, when she approached too nearly the delicate secret. She wondered whether she had spoken plainly enough to let him understand how much she knew. It was not her desire to come to plain words, she would spare him that humiliation. It would be quite enough, it would answer her purpose fully to let him understand that she knew the real facts as to the relationship in which she stood to the tutor.

"Papa," said Arminell, "Giles Inglett Saltren strikes me as standing towards us much in the same relation as do those apocryphal books the names of which my lady was teaching the children on Sunday. He is not canonical, of questionable origin, and to be passed over."

"I do not understand you, Armie."

"I am sorry, papa, that I do not see my way to express my meaning unenigmatically."

“ Armie, I have been talking to mamma about your paying a visit to Aunt Hermione. You really ought to see the Academy this year, and, as mamma and I do not intend to go to town, it will be an opportunity for you.”

“ Aunt Hermione ! ”—Arminell stood still. “ I don’t want to go to her. Why should I go ? I do not like her, and she detests me.”

“ My dear, I wish it.”

“ What ? That I should see the Academy ? I can take a day ticket, run up, race through Burlington House, and come home the same evening.”

“ No, my dear, I wish you to stay a couple of months at least, with Hermione.”

“ I see—you want to put me off, out of the way of the tutor, so as to have no more talk, no more confidences with him. That is my lady’s scheme. It is too late, papa, do you understand me ? It is too late.”

“ What do you mean ? ”

“ What I say. This is locking the door after the horse is stolen. Send me away ! It will not alter matters one scrap. As I said before, the precautions have come too late.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

“FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.”

SUDDENLY, in the midst of his breakfast, Lord Lamerton uttered an exclamation and turned purple, and thrust his chair from the table.

Lady Lamerton sprang from her seat. Arminell was alarmed. She had not seen her father in this condition before; was he threatened with apoplexy?

“Look at it! God bless my soul!” gasped his lordship. “What confounded scoundrel has written it? Look at it, Julia, it is monstrous.”

He thrust a newspaper from him.

“It is in this damned Radical daily. Look at it, Julia! Where is Macduff! I want Macduff. I’ll send for my solicitor. Confound their impudence, and the lies—the lies!” Lord Lamerton gasped for breath, then he went on again, “From our Own

Correspondent—who is he? If I knew I would have him dragged through the horse-pond ; the grooms and keepers would do it—delighted to do it—if I stood consequences. Here am I held up as a monster of injustice, to the scorn, the abhorrence of all right-minded men, because I have capriciously closed the manganese mine. There is a harrowing picture drawn of a hundred householders thrown out of work—and thrown out of work, it is suggested, because at the last election they voted Liberal ; I am depopulating Auburn—I am in a degree breaking up families. Not a word about the mine threatening my foundations—not a hint that I have lost a thousand pounds a year by it these five years. I am driving the trade out of the country ; and, as if that were not enough, here is a sketch of the sort of house in which I pig my tenants—Patience Kite's tumble-down hovel at the old lime-quarry ! As if I were responsible for that, when she has it on lives, and we want to turn her out and repair it, and she won't go. When we have condemned the house, and gone as far as the law

will allow us ! Where is Macduff ? I must see Macduff about this ; and then ”—his lordship nearly strangled, his throat swelled and he was obliged to loose his cravat—“and then there is a picture drawn in the liveliest colours of Saltren’s house—I beg your pardon, Saltren, this must cause you as much annoyance as it does myself—of Chillacot, in beautiful order, as it is ; Captain Saltren does right by whatever he has the care of—of Chillacot as an instance of a free holding, of a holding not under one of those leviathans, the great landlords of England. Look at this, then look at that—look at Patience Kite’s ruin and Captain Saltren’s villa ; there you have in a nutshell the difference between free land and land in bonds, under one of the ogres, the earth-eaters. God bless my soul, it is monstrous ; and it will all be believed, and I shall walk about pointed at as a tyrant, an enemy of the people, a disgrace to my country and my class. I don’t care whether she kicks and curses, I will take the law into my hands and at once have Mrs. Kite turned out, and her cottage pulled down or put in

order. I suppose I dare not pull it down, or the papers will be down on me again. I will not have a cottage on my land described as this has been, and the blame laid on me ; the woman shall give up her lease. How came the fellow to see the cottage ? He describes it accurately ; it is true that the door has tumbled in ; it is true that the chimney threatens to fall ; it is true that the staircase is all to pieces, but this is no fault of mine. He has talked to Mrs. Kite, but I am sure she never used the words he has put into her mouth. Where is Macduff ? I wish, my dear Saltren, you would find him and send him to me. By-the-way, have you spoken to your father about—what was it ? Oh, yes, the sale of his house. Fortunate it is that a railway company, and not I, want Chillacot, or I should be represented as the rich man demanding the ewe lamb, as coveting Naboth's vineyard, by this prophet of the press. Who the deuce is he ? He must have been here and must know something of the place, there is just so much of truth mixed up with the misrepresentations as to

make the case look an honest one. I want Macduff. Have you seen your father about that matter of Chillacot, Saltren ? ”

“ My lord,” said Jingles, “ I am sorry I have not seen him yet. In fact, to tell the truth, I—I yesterday forgot the commission.”

“ Oh ! ” said Lord Lamerton, now hot and irritable, “ oh, don’t trouble yourself any more about it. I’ll send Matthews after Macduff. I’ll go down to Chillacot myself. Confound this correspondent. His impudence is amazing.”

Lord Lamerton took most matters easily. The enigmatical words of his daughter, the preceding evening, in the avenue, had not made much impression on him. They were, he said, part of her rodomontade. But he repeated them to his wife, and to her they had a graver significance than he attributed to them. This article in the paper, however, agitated him deeply, and he was very angry, more angry than any one had seen him for several years ; and the last explosion was caused by the poisoning of some of his fox-hounds.

“ Matthews, send James down after Mr. Macduff at once.”

“ Yes, my lord.”

“ And, Saltren, a word with you in the smoking room if you can spare me the time.”

“ I am at your service, my lord.”

Lord Lamerton had been so excited by the article he had read that he was in a humour to find fault ; and, as Viola says

“ Like the haggard check at every feather
That comes before his eye.”

Such moods did not last long ; he was the slowest of men to be roused, and when angry, the most placable ; but an injustice angered him, and he had been unjustly treated in the article in that morning's paper.

There must be deep in our souls, some original sense of justice, for there is nothing so maddens a man and sweeps him in angry fever beyond the control of reason, as a sense of injustice done, not only to himself, but to another. It is the violation of this ineradicable sense of justice which provokes to the commission of the grossest injustice, for it

blinds the eyes to all extenuations and qualifying circumstances. It is an expansive and explosive gas that lies latent in every breast—in the most pure and crystalline, an infinite blessing to the world, but often infinitely mischievous. It is the moral dynamite in our composition.

There is a hot well in Iceland called Strokr, which bubbles and steams far below the surface, the most innocuous, apparently, of hot springs, and one that is even beneficial. But if a clod of turf be thrown down the gullet, Strokr holds his breath for a moment and is then resolved into a raging geyser, a volcano of scalding steam and water. I once let a flannel-shirt down by a fishing-line, thinking to wash it in the cauldron of Strokr, and Strokr resented the insult, and blew my shirt to threads, so that I never recovered of it—no, not a button. It is so with men, they are all Strokr, with a fund of warmth in their hearts, and they grumble and fume, but, for all that, exhale much heat, and nourish flowers about them and pasture for sheep and asses, but some slight wad of turf, or a dirty flannel-shirt—

some trifling wrong done their sense of justice,—and they become raging geysers.

Lord Lamerton was not so completely transformed as that, because culture imposes control on a man, but he was bubbling and squirting. He was not angry with the tutor, personally, because he did not think that the young man was blameworthy. What indiscretion had been committed, had been committed by Arminell. With her he was angry, because her tone towards him, and her behaviour to her step-mother, were defiant. “Saltren,” said he, when he reached the smoking-room and was alone with Jingles, “do you think your uncle could have written that abominable article? I did not mention my suspicion in the breakfast-room, so as not to give you pain, or trouble the ladies, but, ’pon my soul, I do not see who else could have done it. I heard he had been down here on Sunday, and I hoped he had talked the matter of the line and Chillacot over with your father, and had given him sensible advice. Yet I can hardly think he would do such an ungracious, under the circumstances,

such an immoral thing as write this, not merely with *suppressio veri*, which is in itself *suggestio falsi*, but with the lies broadly and frankly put. Upon my word—I know Welsh is a Radical—I do not see who else could have done it.”

“I am afraid he has, though I cannot say. I did not see him, my lord,” said the tutor.

“I am sorry, really it is too bad, after all that has been done—no, I will say nothing about that. Confound it all, it is too bad. And what can I do? If I write a correction, will it be inserted? If inserted, will it not serve for a leader in which all I have admitted is exaggerated and distorted, and I am made to be doubly in the wrong? And now, I suppose it is high time for Giles to go to school. I don’t want you to suppose that this idea of mine has risen in any way from this damned article, or has anything whatever to do with it, because it has not. I do not for one instant attribute to you any part in it. I know that it shocks you as it shocks me; that you see how wrong it is, as I do. But, nevertheless, Giles must go to school;

his mother and I have talked it over, and between you and me, I don't want the boy—dear monkey that he is—to be over-coddled at home. His mother is very fond of him, and gets alarmed if the least thing is the matter with him, and fidgets and frets, and, in a word, the boy may get spoiled by his mother. A lad must learn to hold his own among others, to measure himself beside others, and, above all, to give way where it is courteous, as well as right to give way. A boy must learn that others have to be considered as well as himself, and there is no place like school for teaching a fellow that. So Giles must go to school. Poor little creature, I wonder how he will like it? Cry at first, and then make up his mind to bear it. I do trust if he have his bad dreams, the other chaps won't bolster and lick him for squalling out at night and rousing them. Poor monkey! I hope they will make allowance for him. He is not very strong. Giles must go to school, and not be coddled here. His mother is absurdly fond of the little fellow. I don't want

to hurry you—Saltren, and you can always rely on me as ready to do my best for you but I think you ought to look about you, at your leisure, you know, but still look about you. And, damn that article, don't you have anything to do with Welsh, he will lead you, heaven alone knows whither."

"My lord," said Saltren, "you forestall me. I myself was about to ask leave to depart. I have not the natural qualifications for a tutor; I lack, perhaps, the necessary patience. I intend to embrace the literary profession. Indeed, I may almost say that I have secured a situation which will make me independent. Secured is, possibly, too decided a word—I have applied for one."

"I am glad to hear it, I am very glad. My lady said she thought you had a fancy for something else. But—don't have anything to do with Welsh. He will carry you along the wrong course, along one where I could do nothing for you, and, I will always help you when I can."

"My lord, whenever you can, with convenience, spare me——"

“Spare you! Oh don’t let us stand in your way. You have almost got a berth to get into?”

“I have applied for a place which I may almost say I can calculate on having. My only difficulty has been, that I did not know when I should be at liberty. If your lordship would kindly allow me to leave immediately——”

“My dear fellow, suit your own convenience. We can manage with Giles. The rector will give him an hour or two of Latin and Greek, till the term begins, when he can go to school. I don’t know that I won’t let the monkey run wild till the time comes for the tasks to begin.”

“Then, my lord, it is understood that I may go immediately?”

“Certainly.”

Though Lord Lamerton gave his consent, he was a little surprised at the readiness of the tutor to leave Orleigh, and to throw up his situation before he had really secured another. There was something ungracious in his conduct after all the kindnesses he had

received which jarred on his lordship's feelings. He had a real liking for the young man, and he was desirous that he should do well for himself. He was unable to resist the temptation to say—"You seem in a vast hurry to leave us, Saltren."

"I have reasons, my lord. Something has occurred which makes it imperative on me to leave this house immediately."

"Do you refer to this article by our own correspondent?"

"Not at all, my lord. It has no connection with that. Something, a distressing secret, has come to my knowledge, which forces me to quit Orleigh,"

"What the deuce is it?"

"I will probably write to you, my lord, about it when I am away."

"It is a secret then, between you and me, and—any one else?"

"It is a secret that concerns me most closely, and indeed, others beside me. But, no doubt, your lordship has divined to what I allude."

Lord Lamerton turned hot and cold. Now

Arminell's mysterious words recurred to his memory. What had her meaning been? Was the tutor referring to the same matter? Had that headstrong girl thrown herself into his arms, protesting that she loved him? Very likely. She was capable of doing such a thing. What else could she have meant? What else could induce the young man to go precipitately?

Lord Lamerton hesitated a moment what to say, looking down, and knitting his brows.

“You have, my lord, I can see, guessed to what I refer. It is not a matter on which we can speak together. It would be too painful. Each of us would rather say nothing on a very distressing matter. Let what has passed suffice for the present. I am sure, my lord, that you can understand my motives in desiring to leave promptly.”

“’Pon my soul, I think I do. Dash it, I do!”

“Then, my lord, you will not desire to retain me in Orleigh any longer?”

“No—for God’s sake, go. I respect you. You are behaving aright. I am sorry, I am

ashamed, but there, there, you are acting properly. I will not say another word. Go where you like, and always look to me as your friend, nay, as taking almost a fatherly interest in you."

He held out his hand, caught that of young Saltren and pressed it, then left the room for his wife's boudoir.

"Julia," said he, in an agitated tone, "things are worse than we imagined. I thought nothing of it, but you women have eyes where men are blind."

"What has happened?"

"Armie—good heavens!—Armie has offered herself to young Saltren, and he, like a gentleman, like a true, honourable gentleman, has asked me to let him go, because he cannot remain here any longer, under the circumstances."

"Did he tell you this?"

"Not in so many words, but there was no mistaking his meaning. Of course he felt a delicacy—he did not like to say how—but, there, there! I shall be angry again. Ah, that girl! Armie is well off, has her mother's

fortune ; he knows that, but was not to be dazzled. He sees what is right to be done, and does it. Hah ! There comes Macduff. I see him in the drive. I'll have the masons at once, this morning, and tear down Patience Kite's cottage."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A HANDLE TO THE ENEMY.

WHEN Lord Lamerton decided that a thing was to be done, he liked to have it done at once, and now that he was thoroughly roused, he would brook no delay in the matter of Patience Kite's cottage.

Mrs. Kite had baffled the authorities. There was no question that her house was unfit to be inhabited by a human being, and that her life was not safe in it. A heavy gale might bring the roof and chimney down on her in her bed and bury her. The relieving officer had complained and remonstrated. The sanitary officer had viewed the ruin and had condemned it. Mr. Macduff had ordered Mrs. Kite to put the cottage in repair. She did nothing, and apparently nothing could be done with her. She absolutely refused to leave her cottage, and to put it in habitable condition was beyond

her power. If this case had occurred anywhere in Europe except in England, the police would have made short work with Mrs. Kite, but in England, every man's house is his castle, in whatever condition the house may be. Now, had a drain from Mrs. Kite's hovel proved a nuisance to neighbours, she could have been dealt with, but she had no drains at all ; and her roof threatened no one but herself. The authorities had necessarily consumed much time over Mrs. Kite, and all to no purpose. The sanitary officer complained to the board of guardians a month after viewing and condemning the house. The guardians waited another month and then waited on the magistrates in petty sessions to issue an order to Mrs. Kite to vacate her cottage. The order was issued and served. Another month passed, and Mrs. Kite had not budged. At the next petty sessions enquiry was made whether any further steps could be taken. It appeared that Mrs. Kite was liable to a fine of ten shillings for every day she remained after the order had been served, but, as the ser-

geant of police observed to the magistrates, all her goods, if sold, would not fetch ten shillings, and the clerk of the court could find no precedent for evicting the old woman; all that could be done would be to sell her goods, but that was the limit of their power.

She was, it was true, by her tenure, bound to keep the house in good order, and accordingly Lord Lamerton, as lord of the manor, demanded this, but she did nothing. It was true that he might, in the event of a tenant neglecting to fulfil the stipulation, order the repair, and distrain on the tenant for the costs. But Mrs. Kite was not worth distraining, and the house was not worth rebuilding. No one, after the old woman's death, would care to live in such a lonely spot. To rebuild, would cost a hundred and fifty or two hundred pounds. However, rather than that the scandal should continue, Lord Lamerton resolved to rebuild, when he learned that legally he might not pull down without rebuilding. So Mrs. Kite was about to put his lordship to the cost of nearly two hundred pounds to save her life in her own

despite. We have odd ways of doing things in England.*

The news that Mrs. Kite's house was to be pulled about her ears rapidly spread through the village, and many people assembled to see the ejection of the hag and the demolition of roof and chimney.

Mrs. Kite was a personage not a little dreaded ; she was what is called a wise-woman ; she was consulted when any of the cottagers were ill. The medical man was sent for reluctantly, and little trust was put in his medicines, but the wise-woman enjoyed the fullest confidence. To meddle with her was a dangerous matter. She used her powers for good, but it was quite possible for her to employ them otherwise. No one cared to provoke her. Every one desired to stand on good terms with her. Before the rector and Mrs. Cribbage, and my lady and the Macduffs, the villagers spoke disparagingly of Patience Kite, but

* As already said, this is an actual case. The magistrates' order was issued in February 1887, and has been defied to present date, September 1889.

among themselves they regarded her with respect.

Some ill would come of this action of Lord Lamerton, they argued ; he might be a great man, but there are things with which the greatest cannot cope. Ill would come of it ; how, no one could say, but somehow, all agreed, it would come. Had not Patience's uncle beaten her when she was a child, and his house had been burnt down ? . True, folks said that Patience had fired it, and true it was she had been sent to prison on that account ; but it was said she had done it only because they could not otherwise account for the fire. There was Farmer Worth called her an ugly name once, when she asked for skimmed milk, and sure enough his cows had dropped their calves after till he got a goat to run along with them. Moreover, the villagers argued, why should a woman be ejected from her house ? Her father had built the cottage, and it was on three lives, his, his wife's and child's, and now it was Patience's as long as the breath was in her. If she chose to keep it in bad repair that was

her look-out. Because a woman wore rags, was that a reason why Lord Lamerton and Mr. Macduff should pull her gown off her back? Because she had a bad tooth or two in her head, had they any right to knock out all the sound teeth in her jaw? Because she had not patent-leather dancing-pumps, was she to be forced to go barefoot? Because she didn't keep her hair over tidy, was that a reason why she should have her head shaved? Lord Lamerton had no right to interfere. England is a free country, in which folks may act as they like, and live as they like, so long as they do not interfere with their neighbours, and Mrs. Kite had no neighbours. Her cottage was not within sight of Orleigh Park—it did his lordship no injury. Did Mrs. Kite's kitchen chimney threaten to fall on Lord Lamerton's head? Folks, even lords, have no right to interfere with those who don't interfere with them.

Popular sympathy went altogether with Patience Kite. Perhaps at another time the villagers would have been more disposed to judge reasonably, but at this juncture they

were smarting under the sense of wrong caused by the closing of the manganese mine, and were therefore disposed to make common cause with any one against whom his lordship acted with apparent rigour.

When Macduff and his workmen came to the hovel, they found a number of sympathisers assembled, mostly miners out of work and some women.

Outside the cottage sat Thomasine. She had been sent back to her mother from Court farm because of her sprained ankle, which incapacitated her for work. Archelaus Tubb was there also. He, likewise, was out of work—not an unusual condition with him, for he was a bad workman whatever he took up, and got his dismissal wherever he went. The girl was pouting; she had her hands folded in her lap, and her brows bent. She looked wonderfully handsome, with a dash of savagery in her beauty.

Within the house was Mrs. Kite. She had put together her few valuables in an oak chest, and sat on it, near her hearth, with her feet on the hearthstone and her arms folded.

She would not move. The house might be dismantled about her, but there she would remain to the last.

Mr. Macduff entered the cottage, and received a scowl from Thomasine as he passed her. He endeavoured, but in vain, to persuade the woman to come outside.

“ But,” said Mr. Macduff, “ they’re about to pu’ the roof down over your head.”

Mrs. Kite made no answer.

Then he became angry, and ordered two masons to enter the ruin and remove the old woman ; but this they were afraid to do. They pretended that the reason was lest she should bring an action against them ; really, lest she should “ overlook ” them ; that is, cast an evil eye upon them.

“ I’ll give half a sovereign to any who will bring her out,” offered the agent.

The men shrugged their shoulders, and a miner who was lounging against a tree in the rear muttered, “ If you’re so anxious to get her out, you and his lordship had best drag her out yourselves.”

“Begin with the demolition,” ordered Macduff.

The workmen scrambled on the roof, and commenced tearing off the old, thin and rotten thatch, beginning at the end furthest removed from that where the old woman sat.

A few groans and exclamations of “shame !” issued from the lookers-on.

As the thatch was being riven away, plaster from the rotten ceiling fell, and with it drifts of straw, into the cottage. Dust rose, thick and blinding, but Mrs. Kite refused to stir. She would stifle there rather than desert her hearth.

Again Macduff went to the door to expostulate. The woman answered with a snarl as a wild beast worried in its lair.

“Go on,” shouted Macduff to the men.

Then suddenly a tie-beam gave way, and fell through, with a crash, to the cottage floor.

Immediately ensued a rush of lookers-on to the cottage door and windows, but the dust drove out in their faces, thick as steam, preventing them from seeing anything. But,

though Patience could not be seen, her voice was heard muttering behind the fog of lime and dust of rotten wood.

Macduff did not relish his task. Lord Lamerton was not present ; he had gone to a ploughing match, where he was to distribute the prizes. If my lord had been at home, the agent would have asked for further directions ; but, as he was away, he felt bound to proceed according to his orders.

The workmen engaged on the roof now discovered that their lunch hour had arrived, and they descended the ladders with alacrity to regale themselves on the cake and cold tea they had brought with them.

The pause allowed the dust to clear away, and Macduff, looking through the doorway, descried Mrs. Kite, powdered with lime, her hair almost white, still crouched on her box in the same place, resting her chin in her hands, and her elbows on her knees.

What was he to do ? He bit his lips, and swore in broad Scotch. The masons were eating and joking among themselves. The miners were muttering.

Leisurely—before Macduff had decided on a course, and reluctantly, the masons refolded their bundles, and returned to the ladders.

“Rip off the straw,” said the agent, “but be varry careful not to disturb the principals. If the old creature finds she has nae cover o’er her head when the rain comes, maybe she’ll depart of her own accord.”

The stripping off of the thatch was resumed, and the dust fell thicker over the part of the room where Mrs. Kite sat ; it poured out of every opening, it rose from where the roof had been torn ; the cottage resembled a smoking dunghill, and the cloud spread over and enveloped the whole clearing, powdering grass and bushes, and the coats and boots of the spectators.

All at once, a shout from a mason, then a crash. He had been astride on a principal when it had given way and the man had fallen through the ceiling into the room beneath, tearing down the laths and plaster with him. He was not injured, he came forth a moment later, coughing and sneezing, as

dusty as a miller, and was saluted with laughter.

“Halloo there!” shouted Macduff. “The roof is going.”

The failure of one principal entailed the fall of the rest; they were dragged out of place; they slanted on one side, parted from the chimney, but remained on the walls, inclined.

Thomasine, alarmed for her mother’s safety, now clung to the door, and cried to her to come forth. She could see nothing for the cloud that filled the cottage. Thomasine, lamed by her sprained ankle, stood at the door and limped painfully a step forward.

“Oh, Arkie! Arkie!” she cried, appealing to her lover, “do run in and force mother to come out.”

“But she will not come,” remonstrated he. Another shout—now of dismay.

“The chimney! the chimney!”

A crack had suddenly revealed itself. The rotten loosely-compacted wall had parted.

“It will be down in a minute! save her!”

“Five—I mean one sovereign to any who will bring her out,” shouted Macduff.

Then Thomasine grasped Archelaus’ shoulder. “Come,” she said, “I will go—help, we must save her.”

“I will do it,” said the lad and plunged into the cottage.

For a moment every one held his breath. Thomasine limped away from the doomed cottage. All heard the young fellow’s voice shouting to Mrs. Kite.

Then, suddenly, the whole chimney came down with a rush. It was as though it had closed into itself like a telescope. A dull, heavy thud, muffled by the dense enveloping fog of dust, was heard, and then volumes of yellow smoke-like fumes poured out in gushes and spirals, and rose in a column above the cottage.

Dense though the cloud was, in through it rushed the men, stumbling over heaps of stone, and choking in the thick air, but saw nothing whatever, could see nothing; and came forth coughing, rubbing their eyes, half suffocated, half blinded.

Nothing could be done, the extent of the mischief could not be discovered till the volumes of fine powder, pungent as snuff, had been given time to clear away, at least partially.

Now Macduff plunged in, and stumbled against Thomasine weeping and wringing her hands ; blindly groping in the opaque atmosphere, thick as soup. “ My mother ! My Arkie ! They are both dead ! Both taken from me ! ”

“ Stand aside ! ” shouted the agent. “ What creatures these women are. ” He coughed and growled. “ If anything has happened, it is her fault, she was warned. But the blame will be put on me. ” Then he shouted, “ Tubb ! Tubb ! Mrs. Kite ! ” but received no answer.

In at the door came the men again, miners and masons together, and by crouching they obtained clearer air, and were better able to see. The fallen chimney formed a great heap, and the ruins were spread over the whole floor ; but how high the heap rose they were unable to distinguish, for the dust-

mist hung about it, dense, impenetrable, disclosing only, and that indistinctly, the base of the mound.

Then a cry from Thomasine. She had clasped a hand that protruded from the rubbish pile.

“It is Arkie! It is Arkie!” she cried. “He is dead, he has been killed.”

“Run,” ordered Mr. Macduff. “Run, some of you fellows, for picks.”

“If he’s dead, you’ve killed ’n,” growled a miner. “That is—you and my lord.” The man went forth, whilst the rest, crouching, wiping their eyes on their cuffs, and wiping the dust into them, clearing their throats and choking again, began to pull the stones away. But the chimney had been built of as much clay as stone. Though so close to a lime-kiln, little lime had been used in its construction, and the slaty stone itself corroded by weather and the lime which had lain between its films in the quarry had dissolved to black powder. A pick did not suffice to remove the rubbish, shovels were required as well. The dust did not disperse, every upturn of

the heap sent forth fresh volumes mingled with soot ; but many hands were now engaged, and in ten minutes Archelaus Tubb had been extracted, and was carried forth and laid on the turf outside.

He was so covered with dust that he looked as if made of dark earth, all of one colour—face, hair, clothing, hands.

“ Run for a doctor,” called Macduff. “ Where is he to be taken to? Go on some of you turning over the heap. Look for Mrs. Kite, she must be there. Confound the obstinacy of the woman. I shall be blamed for this, of course. Always so. The saddle put on the wrong horse. Some of you get water, and wash his face, and see where the lad is hurt. Please stand back, Thomasine, you can do no good. I will go back and help to find Mrs. Kite. Why the de’il could she not have come forth when bidden? She had warning enough given her.” Then he returned to the cottage. He was now himself so covered with dust that the natural colour of his face and the tincture of his garments could not be distinguished. Looking up

from inside the cottage was like looking into a London fog. There was a great gap where the chimney had stood, the roof was stripped of its covering and the principals were inclined out of their proper positions.

“Well,” said Macduff. “Have you come on her?”

“We haven’t come on nothing but Arkie Tubb,” answered one of the men. “There’s a lot of rummage more to be cleared away.”

“Look sharp about it,” said the agent. “If she be buried, the only chance of life for her is to be dug out at once.”

“Not much chance of life, then,” said one of the men.

A quarter of an hour passed, and Patience had not been exhumed.

A diversion of interest was caused by the arrival of the surgeon. He examined the young man, and pronounced that, though he was not dead, he was so injured that he could not live beyond an hour.

The last heap of fallen chimney-ruin had been cleared away, and Mrs. Kite had not been found.

“She has been spirited away,” said the men. “We always knew she was a wise woman.”

“I wouldn’t have had this happen,” growled Macduff, “not for ten pounds—I mean, two pounds ten. What a handle this will give to the enemy !”

CHAPTER XXV.

BAMBOOZLED.

LORD LAMERTON was that day engaged in distributing prizes at a ploughing match, about fifteen miles away from Orleigh.

“My dear,” said he to his wife before he started, “for goodness’ sake come with me into the avenue, and give me the heads of what I am to say.”

Report had it that his lordship got all his speeches from his wife, and report was not far wrong in so saying.

“I’ll run up to Eggins,” he said, “and get him to give me some wrinkles about ploughing. I know nothing concerning it.”

Thus primed, partly by one of his farmers and partly by his wife, his lordship started for the ploughing match ; and on reaching the ground inspected the furrows with his glass to his eye, and repeated some of the

scraps of information he had gathered from Eggins.

After that came the dinner, and after the dinner the prize distribution, and a speech from Lord Lamerton.

His lordship stood up, and coughed. He was not a fluent speaker, nor a ready speaker; indeed he could not speak at all unless he had been given time and opportunity to get primed. But he had a retentive memory, and when allowance was made for hesitation, and repetition, and occasional halts, his speeches were admitted to be not so bad as are the generality of such performances. They read well; only it was a little irritating to listen to them. The hearer never could be sure that his lordship would not break down altogether. Speaking made him and his audience hot. They perspired sympathetically. It made him uncertain what to do with his legs, and those listening to his words found their attention drawn away to his inferior members, and were kept in suspense as to what he would do next with his extremities. Sometimes he endeavoured to

stand on one foot, and then he invariably lost his balance, and grabbed at the table-cloth, or a lady's bonnet to stay himself from falling. On such an occasion he lost the thread of his discourse, and had to seek it in his pocket-handkerchief, whilst those listening good naturedly stamped and rapped the table, and shrieked "Hear hear!"

Sometimes he curled one leg round the other in such a manner that to recover himself he was obliged to face about, and he found himself addressing the latter part of a sentence to the waiter and the tent wall behind him, instead of the audience at the table. It was said that once he put his foot into his plate on the table, but this was an exaggeration; he caught himself about to do it and desisted in time.

How is it that the Englishman is so poor a speaker? I believe that the language is partly the cause. The English tongue is so simple in its structure that it runs out of the mouth faster than the ideas it is supposed to express have taken shape in the brain. Consequently we males, sometimes women

even, say things before we have thought them out, and then are embarrassed because the thought lags behind the word, like the thunder after the flash.

In such a language as the German, however, the mind has to formulate the sentence in all its ramifications and subsidiary articulations, before it is uttered. The idea is kneaded, and squeezed into a shape and then baked. A tap, and out of the buttered mould comes the sentence, compact and complete, whereas, in English, the idea is not given time to set, it is not even half baked, and then it is shaken out, and falls to pieces as it appears ; or, like an ill-set jelly, resolves into an insipid wash.

When Lord Lamerton rose to his feet, he proceeded to blow his nose loudly, then he looked about him, and his face glowed redly. He caught the eye of the Rector of Orleigh, and he said to himself: "Deuce take the fellow, he will know whence I got this speech. He was discussing the matter with my lady the other day."

He arranged his legs as best he could to

support his superincumbent weight, and to make quite sure of not losing his balance laid his hand on the back of a chair. Then he put the other hand into his pocket.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” he began, “I am not the sort of man you should have chosen to speak to you to-day, because——”

Interruptions of “No, no!”

“Because, if you allow me, I am not in the best of moods. I have had an attack, a damned—I beg your pardon, a dastardly attack made on me in the public papers, and I have been—I have been represented—that is, represented as a monster of iniquity, one who is ruining the country, and driving trade out of it.”

— “No, no!”

“I was never more astonished and shocked in my life. I did think, gentlemen and ladies, that, if there was one thing I cherished and loved, and strove to live for it was—that is to say—it was my country, and next to my country, my dear old—my dear old mother county.”

General emotion, and some of the ladies

who had taken more than two glasses of sherry felt the tears rise into their eyes. Every gentleman kindled and stamped and said, "Hear, hear!"

"But," continued Lord Lamerton, re-adjusting his balance, by putting one foot between the rails of the chair, and the other on a hat of a gentleman, that was on the floor near him, and removing his hand from his trouser to his waistcoat pocket, "but, ladies and gentlemen, I will pass from personal matters to the subject in hand." (Then, to himself, "Confound the rector, I can see by the twinkle of his eye that he knows what is coming.") "But, ladies and gentlemen, we are here assembled on an august and interesting occasion, perhaps one of the most august and interesting that could have arisen—I mean, I mean, a ploughing-match. And this recalls me to the fact that one of our earliest English poets, William Langland, who lived in the reign of Richard II., wrote an entire poem on—what do you suppose? Ploughing. He entitled his poem, 'The Vision of Piers the Ploughman.' And, what would you

think gentlemen and ladies, was the drift of this remarkable composition? We know that long before, centuries earlier, Virgil wrote his ‘Georgics,’ in praise of agriculture, but here, our English poet confined himself to one branch of agriculture, and that, ploughing. And the author represents all men—mark me—*all* men, as ploughmen, all, from the king on his throne and the parson in the pulpit, to the least among us all, as ploughmen set to make our furrows in the great field of the world. And, ladies and gentlemen, each has his own proper furrow to run, and he may make it well, or make it badly, plough deep, or merely skirt the soil, plough straight, or run a feeble, fluttering, irregular line, or he may even fold his hands, and take a snooze in the hedge, and make no attempt to plough.”

A pause: the gentleman whose hat had been converted into a footstool recovered the crushed article from under the foot of the speaker, and cast at him a melancholy, reproachful glance.

“I beg your pardon, ’pon my soul, I did

not mean it. I did not observe it." This was said aside to the sufferer. Then after a complete rearrangement of his attitude, with his legs very wide apart, like that of the Colossus of Rhodes, Lord Lamerton continued, "Ladies and gentlemen! I am much afraid that some of us—I will not say all—for I do not believe it is true of all—I say some of us, and God knows, I include myself, on looking back at our furrows do not find them as we should have wished; do not derive, I mean, much satisfaction in the retrospect; but—but—let me see. Yes!" He leaned both his hands on the table, so that his back was curved, and his position was far from elegant. "But, ladies and gentlemen, the broad fact remains, that we are all plough-boys together, and we must take a lesson from these hearty good fellows we have seen to-day, and in all we do and undertake, make our furrows straight, and drive them deep."

"Hear! Hear! Hear!" and much thumping and stamping; in the midst of which Lord Lamerton sat down, and nearly missed his chair in so doing. Then he leaned over

to the rector, and said, "All my lady's ; 'pon my soul, all. Never read a line of what's-his-name in my life. She has—she reads everything."

Lord Lamerton returned to Orleigh by an evening train. The station was at some distance from his place. Only when the new line was made would he have a station near at hand.

On reaching the Orleigh road station, the master told him what had occurred during his absence. His carriage was in waiting outside to take him home.

"Bless my heart !" exclaimed his lordship. "You don't mean to tell me that Tubb's son is dead, and that the old woman has not been found? Here—" said he to the coachman, "set me down at the Chillacot turn, and drive on. I shall walk home, after I have made enquiries. Deuce take it ! I wouldn't have had this happen for all I am worth. Poor Tubb ! He is a workman and will feel the loss of his son, though the fellow was not good for much—I know that I should be

horribly cut up if anything were to happen to my cub."

He threw himself into the carriage, and continued his exclamations of distress and wonder how it could have come about. "Macduff must have gone to work clumsily. Bless the man, he is a machine."

The carriage stopped.

"Shall I attend you, my lord?" asked the footman at the door, as he held it.

"Attend me! What for? *Me!* I'm going to enquire about the matter, then I shall go on to Tubb's cottage. Tell my lady not to wait dinner."

He swung his umbrella, and walked away. He marched to the quarry where had been Patience Kite's cottage. He thought it possible that some one might still be on the spot and that there he would learn the latest, fullest and most authentic particulars. That the old woman had been seen crouched at her hearth, that the chimney had fallen upon her, and that she had not been exhumed from the ruins, was to him inexplicable. When he came out on the clearing where the ruins of

the cottage stood, Lord Lamerton was surprised to find it occupied by a crowd. A lantern was slung to one of the principals of the roof, above the head of a speaker who occupied a table that had been drawn out of the cottage. That speaker was Mr. James Welsh. Lord Lamerton did not know him by sight, only by reputation.

As my lord appeared on the scene, those there assembled shrank aside, with a look of confusion and shyness. He listened for a moment to the orator, and then proceeded to push his way through the throng, which divided to allow him to pass ; and, approaching the table, he said, "I beg your pardon, sir ; I have not the honour of knowing your name ; but you are making pretty free with mine. What is it all about ?"

"You are Lord Lamerton, I presume ?" said the orator, looking at the dismayed faces of those within the radiance of the lantern. "The saying goes that listeners hear no good of themselves. Perhaps it may be true in this case."

"I have not been listening, but I have

caught a sentence or two; and I have no idea of allowing anyone taking liberties with my name behind my back. If you have anything to say about me, say it to my face. What is all this about?"

"What is all this about?" repeated the orator. "His noble lordship, the Right Honourable Giles Inglett, Baron Lamerton, asks, What is all this about?" In a lower tone charged with oratorical irony, "*What* is all this about?" Mr. Welsh looked round on his audience. "Having shut up his manganese mine, and reduced a hundred men to destitution, broken up their homes, obliged them to wander over the face of the earth in quest of work, without houses of their own, without bread to put into the mouths of their children, forced to sell their poor sticks of furniture down to the baby's cradle—he asks, What is all this about? After having torn down a house over the head of a poor widow, and bespattered her grey hairs with gore, he asks, What is all this about? After having deprived a father of his only child, and an orphan of her mother, he has the effrontery—yes—in the face of his

lordship I repeat the word, I repeat it in the boldness which my righteous indignation gives me—the effrontery to ask, What is all this about? Possibly, when Cain saw his brother, his younger brother Abel, lying at his feet, with fractured skull and crushed limbs, he also asked, What is all this about? I will not pretend to know where his lordship has been all day; but I do say that, as an Englishman, as a Christian, as a man, when he was about to render desolate the heart of a father by taking the life of his only son, and of a child by bereaving her of her mother, when he was about to tear the roof off from over the head of the widow and the fatherless, he should have been *here*, yes, here and not far away—Heaven knows where—in what scene of riot and revelry, into which decent folk like us would not venture to look.”

“Now come,” said Lord Lamerton, “this is all rubbish. I have been at a ploughing match. I want to know what you are doing here. Who the deuce are you?”

“My lord,” said the orator, “I am—I rejoice to say it—one of the People, one of

the down-trodden and ill-treated, the excluded from the good things of life. My heart, my lord, beats in the right place. Where yours is, my lord, it is not for me, it is for your own conscience to decide. But mine, mine—is in the right place. I am one of the people, and my lord, let me inform you that when you insult me, you insult the entire people of England; you bespatter not me only, but the whole of that enlightened, hearty, intelligent people, of whom I see so many noble, generous specimens before me—you bespatter them, I repeat, my lord, you bespatter them in the grossest and most unwarranted fashion—with dirt.”

“’Pon my soul,” interrupted Lord Lamer-ton, rapping on the table, “I can make no heads nor tails out of all this. If you have anything against me, say it out. If you want anything, tell it me plainly. I am not unreasonable, but I’m not going to stand here and listen to all this rigmarole.”

“Perhaps, my lord, you are not aware, that there are many grievances under which the Public, the PUBLIC, my lord, are groan-

ing. Shall I begin with the lighter, and proceed to the graver, or reverse the process?"

"As you please. It is one to me."

"Very well," said Welsh. He looked round complacently on his audience, and rubbed his hands. "His lordship, in all simplicity of heart, wants to know what occasion he has given for this indignation. What occasion," with a chuckle, and those who could see his face and catch his tone chuckled also. "What occasion," with sarcasm, and his audience felt their gall rise. "What occasion," in a hollow thrilling tone, and the crowd responded with a groan. "Shall we tell his lordship? We will, and we will begin with some of the lighter grievances, heavy in themselves, but light in comparison with the others. In the first place, what does he mean by throwing open the grounds on a Tuesday, a day when the public, as he knows, the hard-working public which needs relaxation and the sight of the beautiful, cannot enjoy the boon? Is that, I ask, a day when the shops are closed? Is it a day when the sons of toil in our cities can

get away from their labours and admire the beauties of nature, and the charms of art? It is not. The grounds are thrown open on Tuesdays, with almost fiendish malevolence, and the cunning of the serpent, that his lordship may obtain the credit of liberality, whilst doing nothing to deserve it. The true public are excluded by the selection of the day, but the gentle-folks, the parsons, the squires, and all the do-nothings, to whom one day is as another, they can see Orleigh Park on Tuesdays. If Lord Lamerton had in him any true humanity, any sympathy for the tradesman, for the clerk, for the milliner and the seamstress, he would open on—let us say Saturday.”

“Very well,” said Lord Lamerton, “I have no objection in the world, except that it will give the gardeners more to do, picking up the papers and scraps—henceforth the grounds shall be open to the public on Saturdays.”

“But, my lord, are the pictures and statuary and other works of art to be shown only to the aristocratic eye, and are they to

be carefully kept within closed doors from the profane gaze of what you contemptuously call—The Common People ? ”

“ Not at all,” said Lord Lamerton. “ I will order that the state apartments be opened on Saturdays—though, Lord knows, above a questionable Van Dyck, there are no great shakes in the way of pictures there. Is that all ? ”

“ That is not all,” proceeded Mr. James Welsh. “ Lord Lamerton innocently—I will not say, sheepishly—asks, Is that all ? No, I reply, and I reply as the mouth-piece of all present, as the shout of the democracy of England. It is not all. It is very far from being all. Is that all ? he asks, standing before you, out of whose mouths he has snatched the crust of bread, the staff of life. Is that all ? When he closes the manganese mine, and throws almost the entire population of Orleigh out of employ, and scatters them everywhere, hungry, homeless, forlorn.”

“ Now, this is a trifle too extravagant,” said Lord Lamerton. “ The mine would

have gone under my house and brought it down. Why, it would have cost me twenty thousand pounds to rebuild the house."

"You hear that! Twenty thousand pounds which might have been spent in Orleigh is refused the people. Twenty thousand pounds! How many able-bodied men are there in Orleigh? About two hundred. What might you not have done with a hundred pounds each? What comforts might you not have provided yourselves with? But his lordship buttons up his pockets. Look upon yourselves, each of you, as defrauded of a hundred pounds. My lord will bank his twenty thousand. He does not want it. He hoards it. He fossilizes it. There is a fable about a dog in the manger which snarled at the horses that wanted to eat out of that manger which was of no use at all to the hound."

Then Lord Lamerton raised his voice, and said, "My good friends, I don't believe you are so weak as to be gulled by these fallacies. Why should I allow my house to

be undermined and rattled down about my ears, if I can help it? ”

A voice from the throng shouted, “ Good for trade.”

“ Some one has said,” continued Lord Lamerton, “ some one has remarked that it would be good for trade. I dispute this. I deny it energetically. I say that it would cost me twenty thousand pounds to rebuild the place, but I do not say that—if ousted by the manganese mine, I would rebuild it. Why should I? If I built on any rock, how could I tell but that some vein of metal would again be found under it, and then I might be driven away once more. Or if I built on clay, some company might insist on exploring the clay for aluminium; or if I built on gravel, it might be insisted on to under-dig me for coprolites, for the formation of artificial manure. Why, I say, should I risk my twenty thousand pounds when my very foundations are no security for the outlay? I would say to myself: As there is no security any where, I will spend my twenty thousand pounds in amusing myself

on the Continent, on personal jewellery—or God knows what selfish luxuries. Security of property, unassailability of right of property, that is the basis of all prosperity in trade. Touch property, and down goes trade with it. Look at the Jews in past times. They had no security, so they hoarded, and never spent a farthing they could not help. They did nothing for trade with their wealth. Touch property, and no one with money will do other than did the Jews. Touch property, and down goes trade.” Lord Lamerton thumped the table. “Now look here, I don’t want to be hard on any one. I have lost a great deal of money already on the manganese, which has not paid for these five years, but has been worked at a dead loss. I don’t see my way to lose more, and to endanger, moreover, the walls of my house. That is plain sense. But as I say, I won’t be hard on any one. If the miners cannot get work elsewhere, I’ll set them road-making. They can cut a new road as soon as ever it is settled where the station is to be, and hedge and stone it.

That will cost me a thousand pounds, if it will cost me a penny."

"Just listen to this proposal," shouted Welsh, who found that the plain sense of Lord Lamerton was producing some effect. "You hear his lordship's magnanimous offer. He will take you honest, hearty, active mining fellows and debase you to stone-breakers by a road-side. He has had such experience in heart-breaking, that he thinks to set you a job that commends itself to his fancy—stone-breaking. But let us pass from this. I have not done with my noble lord yet. Not by any means. The last of his misdeeds is not yet quite exhausted. I want to ask the Right Honourable Baron Lamerton how it is that he is so sensitive about the tumbling down of his own house, and so ready by the hands of his Macduffs and other minions to tear down the walls of the widow's cottage? I ask him that. See—he is confounded, he cannot answer." Welsh looked round triumphantly. "Nor is that all," he pursued; "I have another question to put, to which also, I have no

doubt, I shall meet with silence only as an answer. His lordship who is so touchy about the rights of property is, I suspect, only touchy about the rights of his *own* property. I have it on the best possible authority that he is threatening to dispossess a man whom we all esteem, Captain Saltren, to dispossess him of his house and land, a house built by his father and repaired and beautified by himself. I believe I am not wrong in saying that he has threatened to employ law against our valued friend, Captain Saltren."

A cry of "Shame, shame!"

"Yes," pursued the orator, "it is shame. What was that his lordship said just now about rights of property? Touch property, he insisted, and down goes trade. Who is touching property. Who but he? Who lays his envious grasp—he, Ahab, on the vineyard of the poor Naboth."

Then the orator jumped off the table, and in a changed tone said to Lord Lamerton, "I must be off and report this meeting. I've a train to catch. Give you a leader on

it, old cock. No offence meant ; none I hope taken. Both of us men of the world, and know how to live by it. I know as well as you what is gammon, but gammon is the staple diet of the chawbacon. Give us your hand." He nudged the nobleman in the side. " Bamboozled, my lord, eh ? I am James Welsh. Pretty considerably bamboozled, eh ? "

CHAPTER XXVI.

DUMFOUNDERED.

WHEN James Welsh sprang from the table, and held out his hand, Lord Lamerton was in that condition of bamboozlement that he did not know what to do, whether to mount the table and address the audience, or to walk away ; whether to accept the proffered hand, or to refuse it. He felt as does a boy who has been blindfolded and set in the midst of a room to be spun about, struck, and bidden catch his persecutors, but who finds himself unable to touch one.

Whatsoever he said was caught from his lips and converted into a fresh charge against him ; every kindness he proposed was perverted into an act of barbarity.

And then—after he had been thus treated his persecutor bounced down before him, and in the most cheery tone in the world, declared that no offence was intended, asked him if he

were bamboozled, and invited him to shake hands. Lord Lamerton was no match for his assailant. He was not a ready man. When he had been primed by his wife, or after laborious preparation, he was able to produce the collected matter, but neither smoothly nor naturally. His sentences came from him as liquid issues from a barrel unprovided with a vent. They flowed for a while, then stopped, and a gulp ensued, after that a drop or two ; another gulp, and then a rush of words forming a sentence, or, more probably, a sentence and a half. An interruption confused Lord Lamerton, a question silenced him. He was deficient in precisely those qualities which Mr. Welsh possessed in perfection—ready wit, assurance, bluntness of feeling qualities essential to the successful orator. Welsh knew exactly how to keep in touch with his audience, he could gauge their ignorance at a glance, and would always accommodate himself to their capacity. He had unbounded audacity, because utterly without scruple ; he had smartness, and skill in parrying.

Lord Lamerton stood back. The night was not dark, but the trees cast shadows about the glade where the meeting was held, and the lantern cast but a feeble light. His movements could be seen only by those who were close to him, and in his condition of bamboozlement, he was glad to take advantage of the opening made in the throng by Welsh, to follow and place himself outside the crowd. He did not leave altogether ; he remained to see what would follow, and to gather together his scattered senses. He leaned against the bole of a Scotch pine, and looked on unobserved. Those who had noticed that he had passed through concluded that he had left entirely.

“What a thing it is,” muttered Lord Lamerton, “to have the gift of assurance. That fellow was all in the wrong, and I was all in the right, but I could not explain my right, and he was able to make all I said seem wrong. ’Pon my soul, I don’t believe that he was in earnest, and believed in what he said. I couldn’t do that, God bless me ! I couldn’t do that and look my lady in the face again.”

Suddenly Captain Saltren appeared on the table vacated by Welsh. He looked more gaunt, hollow-eyed and pale than usual, but this may have been the effect of the lantern-light falling from above on his prominent features. The moment he appeared he was greeted with clapping of hands and cheers.

As Lord Lamerton looked on, he thought the scene was strangely picturesque, it was like a meeting of old Scotch Covenanters. To the north, the sky was full of twilight, but black clouds drove over it, flying rapidly, though little wind was perceptible below. Against the silvery light rose the well-wooded hill with spires of pine, and larch, and spruce, like one of those fantastic prospects of a mediæval city in Doré's night pictures. In front was the ruined cottage with the yellow lantern, suspended from a projecting beam, and in its radiance the form of the mining captain as wild as the surroundings. Between the looker-on and the table were the figures of men, boys, and some women, partially illumined by the pale twilight from above, partially by the yellow halo

of the lantern. . Now and then a match was struck, as a man lit his pipe, and then, there was a flare, and the heads that intervened were distinctly seen, black against the momentary flash.

Saltren looked from side to side, and waved his arms. As he did so, the fingers of his right hand came within the direct rays of the lantern, and were seen quivering and in movement as though he were engaged in playing a piece of rapid music on an unseen instrument. And in truth, he was so doing, and doing it unconsciously. From these long, thin, thrilling fingers, invisible threads attached themselves to the nerves of those who stood before him, and before he spoke, before he opened his mouth, a magic, altogether marvellous accord was established between him and those who surrounded him. It is told of St. Anthony of Padua that he was once asked to preach to an audience whose tongue he could not speak, and who understood not a word of Italian. He went up into the pulpit, looked round, and all in the church went into paroxysms of contrition

and tears, and—he had not said a word. The secret of this power is intensity of conviction and absolute sincerity. Saltren was convinced and sincere. The look of his face, the agitation of his limbs, the convulsive movements of his lips all proclaimed his sincerity.

The captain, moreover, was known to all those who now looked up to him, known as a man of probity, true in all he said and just in all he did, a blameless man. But though his blamelessness commanded respect, there was in him, something beyond the blamelessness that commanded respect; and that something was his spirituality. Men felt and acknowledged that there existed in him a mysterious link with the unseen world. All, even the dullest were aware, when speaking with Captain Saltren, that they were in the presence of a man who lived in two worlds, and principally in that which was supersensual and immaterial. He impressed the people of Orleigh—as did Patience Kite—with awe. These two belonged to the same category of beings who lived in an atmos-

phere of the supernatural ; the captain talked with angels, and Patience Kite with, perhaps, devils. The influence both exerted was not confined to the ignorant, it extended to those who were partially educated ; perhaps he influenced these latter even more than the former. In the general flux and disintegration of belief, those who were most aware of the *débauche* clung most tenaciously to the skirts of such who still remained convinced. Now Mrs. Kite, however sceptical she might be in religious matters, had no doubt whatever in her own powers, and Captain Saltren was profoundly rooted in his own convictions, and this was the source of the strength of both.

As he stood on the table, his limbs trembled as though he were stricken with the ague, his mouth quivered, sweat streamed from his face. He could not speak, emotion overpowered him. He waved his hands, and his fingers clutched at the air, and he looked nervously from side to side.

A woman screamed, fell on her knees, and shrieked for mercy. She thought she was at

a revivalist meeting, and the movement of Saltren's hands had caught every nerve in her head and had drawn together and knotted them, so that she shrieked with the tension insupportable.

“My friends and fellow sufferers,” began Saltren. The cry of the woman had unloosed his tongue, for it proclaimed that sympathy was established between him and his hearers. “I have doubted”—he spoke slowly, in a low tone, with tremor in his tones, and with diffidence—“I have doubted whether I should address you or not. I do not desire to speak. I am held back, and yet I am thrust on. I am like an anchored vessel with the sails spread and the wind filling them. The anchor must part, or the sails be torn to shreds. The anchor is in the earth, the breath of heaven is in the sails. I know which ought to go. But there is strain—great strain;” he paused and passed his hand over his face, and it came away dripping with moisture. “I have no natural gift. I am fearful of myself. I cannot speak as did James Welsh. I am no scholar. I am an

ignorant man. But so were the apostles, taken from their nets, and so was Levi taken from the receipt of custom. So was Elisha, drawn from the plough. I hang back. I can say with David, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother."

Then the woman, kneeling, began again to scream, "Lord, have mercy! have mercy!" and her cries assisted in thrilling and exciting the speaker and people alike. Some of the audience began to groan and sigh. One young bumpkin from behind called out, "We don't want no sarmon. If you're going to preach, I'm off." Then ensued a commotion; heads were turned, exclamations of anger and disgust greeted the interruption, and the lad was hustled away.

Saltren resumed his speech, when the interruption was over and quiet restored.

"I am," he said, "a quiet man. I keep to myself and to my own concerns. So was Gideon a quiet man, keeping to himself and his farm. But the spirit of prophecy came

on him, and he was summoned to lead the people against Midian, and to smite the enemy hip and thigh, and utterly to destroy them." The tones of his voice became firmer and deeper. His hearers trembled as he trembled, and their hearts quivered with every vibration of his voice.

Lord Lamerton listened with amazement. He and that ploughboy who had called out in mockery were the only two in that assembly who had not fallen under the influence of the orator, one because he was cultivated beyond its reach, the other because he was spiritually sunk beneath it.

The clouds had now formed a black canopy overhead, and as a pause ensued in the address of Saltr n, the rush of the wind could be heard in the tree-tops.

"There was neither sword nor spear found among the Israelites," continued Saltren, "and yet they overthrew their enemies, and the way was scattered with their garments and weapons as far as Jordan. I am an ignorant and a foolish man, and yet I am sent to you commissioned from above. I

cannot forbear, for I am driven on. Moses was in favour with the Egyptians, and yet he threw away his advantages because of the sighing and the groaning of his people. I have had no favour with the Egyptians, but I have been sent to lead Israel out of captivity. I would keep silence, but I may not. I have had a call as had Jonah, and if I try like him to fly, I shall be brought back. I must deliver my message. If I were sunk in the sea, the sea would throw me up. If I were covered by the mountains falling, I should come forth to proclaim the message. That is why I stand here before you. I have wrestled with myself. I have shrunk from declaring what I have seen and heard, but if I were to hold my peace, I should be broken as a rotten branch, and be consumed in the fire. Therefore I must speak."

He paused and drew a long breath, and again wiped his brow. All the audience drew a long breath with him. Overhead the wind muttered and puffed, and along the horizon at the back the dark spires bent and righted themselves.

“I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day,” said Saltren, and at once, as he said the words, the man was changed. His tremors ceased, his knees no longer shook, he stood firm with head erect, and with a face as that of a frozen man and his hands clasped before his breast.

“I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day,” he repeated. “I was here, hard by, down by the water—no, on the water, in the old quarry, engaged in prayer. Then, suddenly, I saw a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, and I was as one dazzled and in a trance ; and I heard a voice, like the voice of a trumpet calling to me, and saying, Saltren, Saltren, Saltren ! Then, before I could answer, I saw an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having a little book in his hand, and he held it aloft, and cried, ‘This is the Book of the Everlasting Gospel, this is the truth hid from the earth for ten thousand years, and now at length revealed unto men.’ Then I cried, Give me the book. And the angel cast it down, and said, ‘This is the Everlasting Gospel, all men are equal, all

are the sons of the one Adam, and are children of one family. There shall be no more rich and poor, noble and common ; all shall be equal, and so all shall be one.' ”

Then some of those who heard, carried away by their emotions, began to leap and hold up their hands, and cry, “ Glory, Allelulia ! ” and the woman on her knees was joined by others who united in cries for mercy. For a few moments a whirlwind of groans and exclamations and general commotion swept over the assembly, and as suddenly died away again.

“ Then,” continued Saltren, “ Then the angel cast down the book, and it fell into the water, but as it fell I read thereon the title, *The Gilded Clique*. And what, I ask, is the gilded clique, which like a sponge, sucks in all the wealth of the country and gives nothing back ? What is the gilded clique which claims to itself nobility and gentility, and calls us common and unclean ? What is the gilded clique which sits alone, firm on its strong foundations struck in the earth, and drives us from place to place in search of

work and food? Which denies to all but itself sure and lasting homes, and a certain future? What is the gilded clique which carries corruption into our families, and blights the land with its vices? The gilded clique! Such are they. A handful of dirt! Such are we. But where are truth and righteousness, diligence and honesty to be found? Among them? In the gilded clique? or among us, in the handful of dirt? The day of reckoning is approaching, already has one seal of the seven been unclasped, and I have read what it is to be, and what I have read, that must I proclaim. As I wrestle night and day in prayer, more and more of the contents of the book are disclosed to me. When it fell from heaven, I saw only the cover and what was thereon, but since then, when I am in prayer, I am shown the book and the seals, and one after another is unclosed, and I read further. Time will reveal what is now hidden from your eyes. Only have confidence, and look forward."

As Saltren talked, he worked himself out

of the constraint with which he had begun, and he spoke easily, fluently, as one inspired, speaking with authority ; and his action as he addressed the audience was dignified, serious and easy. His voice was full, deep and sonorous, and his eye flashed with conscious power. Whilst he was speaking, a few drops of rain began to fall, large and warm ; and the sky overhead was black with cloud. Behind, in the ruined cottage, strange, spectral, blue flashing lights began to play, seen at first on the threshold, then on the hearth, and then dancing from one end to another of the hovel. The course of the flame could not be traced by those without, because the walls intervened, but it was seen quivering at the broken doorway, and then through the shattered window.

Those who stood near the cottage, shrank from it, cowering back, pressing on those behind, and leaving a space between them and the table, and the house where these ghostly lights moved about. Saltren alone was unconscious of what passed in the ruin, for his back was to it.

“We have our misery brought home to us,” he continued. “Why are we thrown out of work? Why am I threatened with having my house taken from me? Why is this cottage torn down, and the stones cast upon an innocent man to crush the life out of him? The Lord has suffered all this to come upon us at once, so as to rouse us to a knowledge of the truth revealed to me that all are equal, and in our equality are one; and that the time has arrived when the poor are to rise and put their feet on the necks of their oppressors. I saw on the cover of that book which descended to me from above the clouds, the head of a man, and the cover was red with blood, and I saw how that that man was handed over first to destruction, the first among many; and I know how that the heads of those predestined to destruction will appear in order, one after another, on the cover of the book, as the sentence goes forth against each. He who comes first is the chief offender, he who has caused so much woe, he who has destroyed the peace of homes, that one—”

A shout of “Name, name!”

Then, suddenly, from within the ruin flared up a vivid conflagration, golden yellow, so brilliant as to light up the faces of all present turned to the speaker, and convert every leaf of every tree into a flake of gold.

Women shrieked, then were instantaneously hushed, hushed as in death, for, standing on the table behind Saltren, they saw Patience Kite, wild, ragged, with her hair about her shoulders, and an arm extended, pointing. Saltren, also, by the vivid glare, saw Lord Lamerton under the Scotch fir, his face catching full the reflection, as if illumined by the sun.

“Do you ask his name?” he shouted. “He is there.” He also pointed, and all the while was unconscious that the wild woman near him was indicating the same man.

Then the whole assembly turned to look, and for a moment saw Lord Lamerton.

For a moment only, for the flame fell, and cries, piercing, thrilling every nerve, distracted the attention of the crowd. A woman had fallen in convulsions on the ground, declaring that she had seen the Devil.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FLOUTED.

LORD LAMERTON put his hand to his head—he could not have spoken if addressed, he was dumfounded. After the assault delivered by James Welsh, he might possibly have blundered through some sort of self-exculpation, but the attack of Captain Saltren was so amazing, so unexpected, so different in kind from anything against which he was armed, that he could not speak, could not utter a syllable.

He was all at once caught by the arm, and saw the faces of Jingles and Arminell.

“My lord,” said young Saltren, hastily, “you must not stay here. The people are incensed, and may do you an injury.”

Lord Lamerton looked from the tutor to his daughter, and then back again. What had brought him there? Why had Arminell thus acted in disobedience to his wishes, and against common decorum? But he said

nothing, he was struck dumb. The world was turned upside down, and those who had stood on their feet were now on their heads.

Young Saltren took his arm, and he allowed himself to be led away.

He did not recover at once from his bewilderment. He was as a man stunned. What he had experienced that night was unlike any other experience he had gone through. A sense of helplessness momentarily came upon him, of inability to resist the forces of fanaticism, unscrupulous partisanship, superstition and prejudice gathered against him. He could neither descend to the personalities and dishonesties of Welsh, nor climb to the fantastic extravagance of Saltren.

Like a plain Englishman he liked to fight face to face with his antagonist on open ground, and on a level, to hit straight before him, and give hard blows ; but he was taken in flank, and bewildered among the tortuous defiles into which he was drawn by Welsh, and unable to touch Saltren who menaced him from aerial heights.

There are two sorts of culture, as there are

two eyes and two ears, and two hands, and two feet to every man, and two poles to the globe, and two lights to rule the day and night. But these two cultures are very different in their effects.

The man without intellectual culture has strong opinions, is rugged and angular, and is unable to conceive of the possibility of any qualifications to what he holds as the truth. As he becomes cultivated, he is cut into more facets, and rubbed down, and still further culture makes the angles obtuse and multiplies the facets till finally he loses all angles, and becomes a globe. Friction among his fellow men has rubbed away every sharpness of opinion, till with perfect culture he ceases to have any opinions at all. Let us put the same fact in another way. The rude man comes out of the dye-vat intense in the colour of his opinions, but every dip he gets in mixed society runs some of his colour out of him, and after having been plunged a good many times in the social wash-tub he ceases to have any distinguishable colour whatever. Intellectual culture makes a man

moderate and tolerant, because he becomes indifferent.

Moral culture has an opposite effect. The uncultivated moral faculty is dull, and blunt to discriminate between right and wrong ; the moral palate requires training, for by nature it tastes only what is crude, and distinguishes sharp extremes. The discipline of life, many a painful experience, and some humiliation, serve to train the moral faculty to nice distinction, and teach it to shrink from the smallest sources of falsehood, to avoid the rank and gross, and to acquire the strictest love of justice. It learns to enjoy the soft velvety port, and to pass the brandied logwood untouched.

Lord Lamerton was a man of double culture. He was not a man of brains, but he was thoroughly scrupulous and honourable, eminently a fair man, and essentially truthful. As such he was incapable of meeting Welsh. His *moral* culture had disarmed him for such a combat. He was like a man called to duel, handling a polished rapier, and engaged with an antagonist armed with a revolver. On

the other hand, his *intellectual* culture incapacitated him from meeting Captain Saltren. Such a craze as that of his about a vision of an angel bearing the Everlasting Gospel was a craze and nothing more, undeserving of being argued about, entitling the holder to a cell in Bedlam.

Political unscrupulousness and fanatical unreason were united against him, and although he was aware that they were powerless to injure him, still they might cause him considerable annoyance. It is never pleasant to be on bad terms with neighbours, however removed from them one may be in class and fortune. It is like living in a land haunted by malaria. You are safe on your toft of high land, and look down on the vaporous and poisonous region below, but it hems you in, it interferes with your independence, you have to reckon upon it, and avoid it. To Lord Lamerton it was intolerable to be on other terms than the best with every one, and he was ruffled and hurt by lack of cordiality and want of reciprocity.

How could he bring these misguided

people to their senses? It would not do for him to send Macduff among them. Macduff was a Scotchman, and did not understand the ways of thought of the Southerners. He was himself unable to do anything. He put his hand to his head—he was utterly dumfounded.

All this while he was walking away, led by the tutor, and had his daughter on the other side of him.

Then, abruptly, Lord Lamerton asked, “How long have you been listening to that—to—I mean—him?”

“O, papa, we have only just arrived, as dinner is over,” answered Arminell. “I heard from Mr. Saltren that there was to be a meeting of protest at the ruined cottage, and I persuaded him to accompany me to it. But we came late—and now the rain has begun to pour down, it will disperse the assembly.”

“Did you know I was here?”

“No—I heard you had walked on to Captain Tubb’s house to make enquiries.”

Lord Lamerton disengaged his arm from

that of Jingles, who still held it, and said, "Mr. Saltren, your way lies to Chillacot. You are no doubt going to your father, and will be glad to remain with him. I will give orders that your clothes and other possessions be removed to-morrow. Things necessary for the night shall be sent at once."

"My lord!"

"I wish you a very good evening, Mr. Saltren, and a good-bye."

Then Lord Lamerton took his daughter's arm, and walked hastily away. The rain was beginning to fall heavily.

He said nothing more for some distance, and Arminell remained silent. But when the park gates were reached, he spoke, and his voice shook as he did so.

"Arminell, this is too bad, this is direct and deliberate revolt. It is not enough for me to be attacked from without, but I must encounter treason in the camp."

"I will not pretend to misunderstand you, papa," said Arminell. "You are annoyed at my coming out at night with Mr. Saltren—with Giles senior."

“Arminell !”

“I am sorry to have caused you annoyance, but, papa, in the first place I was desirous of seeing the meeting, and hearing what was said at it, and of judging for myself.”

“Of hearing your own father abused, insulted and denounced.”

“Not exactly that, papa ; but surely there is wrong on both sides.”

“And you constituted yourself judge over your father !”

“No papa, I wished to hear what was said, and I asked—you know whom I mean—to come with me. It may possibly have been indiscreet.”

“Not merely indiscreet, but wrong, for it was an act of deliberate, wilful disobedience to the wishes of your father, plainly expressed.”

“I do not wish to vex and disobey you, papa, but I will exercise my independence and judgment. I cannot allow myself to be cooped in the cage of proprieties. I must see what is going on, and form my own opinions.”

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“Very well—you shall go to your Aunt Hermione. Your step-mother is not good enough for you. I—your father—am not good enough for you. We are all too strait-laced, too tied hand and foot by the laces of respectability, to serve as a guide or check on such a headstrong piece of goods as yourself. You go to Hermione next week.”

“I do not wish to go to her. I dislike her. I detest the sort of life led in her house, a life utterly hollow, frivolous and insincere.”

“She is a woman of the world.”

“A woman of the world that is passing away. I am standing with one foot on a world that is coming on, and I will not step back on to the other.”

“You go to Aunt Hermione,” said Lord Lamerton peremptorily. He was losing his temper.

“How long am I to be with her?”

“That depends. Your mother has written to ask her to receive you for six months.”

“Six months!” Arminell disengaged herself from her father. “Six months is an

eternity, I cannot ! I will not submit to this. I shall do something desperate. I detest that old Hermione. Her voice grates on my nerves, her laugh raises my bad passions. I can hardly endure her for six days. Her good nature is imbecility itself, and provokes me ; her vanity makes her ridiculous. I cannot, indeed, I will not go to her."

"You must, Armie ! It is my wish—it is my command."

"But not for six months. Six weeks is the outside of my endurance."

"Armie, I heartily wish that there were no necessity for parting with you at all, but you have given me and your mother such cause for anxiety, and such pain, that we have concluded together that it is best for you and us to be separated for a while. You, I have said, give me pain, especially now at a time when I am worried by external troubles. I cannot force you to go to your aunt's, nor force you to remain there longer than you choose, but you know my intentions, and they are for your good, and our own relief."

“Am I such an annoyance to you?” asked Arminell, in a subdued tone.

“Of course, with your waywardness, and open defiance of our authority, you are. You have made me—let alone my lady—very unhappy. You have set yourself up to disagree with us at every point, to run counter to all our wishes, and to take up with persons with whom we disapprove of your associating.”

“I give you pain, papa?”

“Very much pain indeed.”

“And you think it would make you happier if I left Orleigh, and that it would also be better for me?”

“I do, indeed.”

“And six months, you suppose, will cure me of my wilfulness?”

“I do not say that; that depends on yourself.”

“Anyhow, for six months you will have ease of mind if I am away from you, and in good hands?”

“In good hands, certainly. Hermione’s house is a very suitable school. You will

there be brought to understand that deference is due to your superiors, consideration for the feelings of others, respect for opinions that differ from your own, and especially that regard is to be had for *les convenances*, without which social life would go to pieces, as a chain of pearls that has lost its connecting links. *Les convenances* may be, and indeed are, in themselves nothing, but they hold society together. You have been left too much to yourself or with unsatisfactory governesses. You must be taught your proper place. You must go into the stream of social life, and feel the current and its irresistible force."

"Very well, papa, I will go."

"Your aunt will be sure to write to-day ; we shall have a letter to-morrow."

Arminell said nothing. Her brows were knit and her lips set.

"I am sorry we have to give up the trip to Switzerland ; it might have been pleasant, had we been all together, but I must deny myself that. The Irish property has brought in nothing ; and I have lost money in other

ways ; now I must set the men to work on the new road—that is, if they will condescend to make it.”

On reaching the house, Lord Lamerton went at once to the drawing-room, and caught his wife dozing over a magazine. He put his hand on her shoulder, and said,

“ Julia ! ”

She started, and dropped her book.

“ Oh, you are back at last ! Have you had anything to eat ? ”

“ More than I am able to digest, my dear.”

“ How did the speech succeed ? You remembered Langland’s date, I hope ? ”

“ My dear, I have heard too many speeches to-day to remember anything about my own—that is to say, yours. I have had three—one from Mr. Welsh, one from Captain Saltren, and one from Arminell, and upon my soul, I do not know which was the most unpleasant. Do you know where Arminell has been since dinner ? ”

“ In her room, I suppose.”

“ No ; she has been out—with Jingles.”

“ Never ! ”

Her ladyship looked blank.

“It is a fact. She went with him to a meeting held by the malcontents against me ; went to hear what they had to say against her own father, and went with that fellow with whom you had cautioned her not to be seen, and whom I had forbidden to associate with her.”

“Good gracious ! how improper.”

“The girl is unmanageable. However, I have got her to promise to go to her Aunt Hermione for a bit, if Hermione will take her. I tried to make her agree to six months, but I am not sure that I can bring her to consent to so long a banishment.”

“But—to go out with Jingles, after all that has been said to her !”

“And for him to have the audacity to take her out—and to such a meeting.”

“They must have gone out immediately after dinner. You have not dined ?”

Lord Lamerton shook his head.

“I have swallowed a good deal to-day,” he said with an attempt at a smile. “I have been bamboozled by Welsh, dumfounded by Saltren, and flouted by Arminell.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A CONTRETEMPS.

THE inquest on young Tubb took place on the following day. This occasioned fresh unpleasantness, and further excitement of feeling. Unfortunately Captain Saltren was on the jury, and he insisted, against all evidence and reason, in maintaining that the verdict should be to the effect that Archelaus Tubb had been murdered by his lordship. One other jurymen agreed with him, but the others could not go so far. As Saltren stubbornly refused to yield, the jury was discharged, and another summoned by the coroner, which returned "Accidental death," but with a rider blaming Macduff for carelessness in the destruction of the cottage.

Arminell was changed in her behaviour to her father since she had heard Mrs. Saltren's story. She had lost faith in him ; those good qualities which she had previously re-

cognised in him, she now believed to be unreal. The man as he was had been disclosed to her—false, sensual, wanting in honour. All the good he displayed was the domino cast over and concealing the mean and shabby reality. He wore his domino naturally, with a frank *bonhommie* which was the perfection of acting—but then, it was acting. Arminell was very straightforward, blunt and sincere, and hated everything which was not open. Social life she represented to herself as a school of disguises, a masquerade in which no one shows as he is, but dresses in the part he wishes to appear in. Some men and women are such finished actors that they forget themselves in their assumed parts, and such was her father. Having to occupy the position of a county magnate, he had come to fit the position exteriorly, and had accommodated his conscience to the delusion that he was what he pretended to be—the wealthy, blameless, honourable nobleman, against whom not a stone could be cast. All this was a pretence, and Arminell was not angry, only her moral

nature revolted at the assumption. Her high principle and downrightness made her resent the fraud that had been perpetrated on herself and the world.

She had on several occasions heard her father speak in public, and had felt ashamed because he spoke so badly, but chiefly because she was convinced that he was repeating, parrot-like, what had been put into his mouth by my lady. He pretended to speak his own thoughts, and he spoke those of his wife—that was an assumption, and so was his respectability, so his morality.

Arminell had long undervalued her father's mental powers, but she had believed in his rectitude. She thought his virtue was like that stupid going-straightforward that is found in a farmer's horse, which will jog along the road, and go straight, and be asleep as it goes. But Mrs. Saltren's story, which she believed in spite of the improbabilities, improbabilities she did not stop to consider, had overthrown the conviction, and she now saw in her father a man as morally imperfect as he was intellectually deficient.

Had he been open, and not attempted to disguise his offence, she might have forgiven him, but when he assumed the disguise of an upright God-fearing man, doing his duty, her strictly truthful nature rose up in indignant protest.

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“My dear!” exclaimed Lady Lamerton; “good gracious, what is this I hear? What have you done? Undertaken to throw open the grounds and house on Saturday! Why, Lamerton, how could you? Saturday is the day on which I proposed to give our garden-party.”

“’Pon my word, Julia, I forgot about your garden-party!”

“You promised to make a note of the day.”

“So I did—not to be from home. But I forgot when I was asked to allow the place to be seen.”

“You must countermand the order to have it opened.”

“That I cannot do. I publicly, at the meeting, announced that I would allow the

house and grounds to be overrun on Saturday, and I cannot withdraw the permission."

"Only for this once."

"Not for this once. It is the first Saturday after the promise was made. You must postpone your garden-party."

"I cannot do that. The invitations have been sent out. There is no time ; ices, the band, everything, are ordered."

"Well, Julia, we must make shift as we can."

"Look here, Lamerton, how will it do to confine our party to the terrace and garden, and have refreshments in the orangery ? "

"So be it ; that will do very well. The guests will not object. Tell them there has been a clash, and they will enjoy the joke."

"The public will want to be admitted to the house by the principal entrance."

"Of course. They are to be shown the state apartments, and the doubtful Van Dyck."

"Then—how about our guests ? What a predicament you have got me into. We cannot receive our guests at the back door.'

“No need for that, Julia. Receive in the garden. The carriages will set down the guests at the iron gates. Pray heaven we may have fine weather!”

“It will be very awkward. The footmen will have to look after the sight-seers, that they do not poke their umbrellas through the pictures, or finger the ornaments—and we shall want them in the garden to attend to our guests!”

“It will go all right. I will send Macduff to arrange. He is a manager.”

After a pause, Lady Lamerton said, “I am glad Hermione will take Arminell under her wing. You have told Armie to be ready to start on Monday?”

“Yes; I don’t understand the girl, whether she is in a sulk, or sorry for her misconduct.”

“Her boxes are being got ready,” said Lady Lamerton. “There is something in her manner that is uncomfortable. I have noticed it as well as you. When I speak about Lady Hermione, she says nothing, and leaves the room.”

“A plunge in London life will renovate her.”

“I trust so. She sadly needs renovation. The caldron of a London season differs from that of Pelias. The latter rejuvenated those dipped in it ; but the former matures.”

“Have you spoken to Arminell about going out with Jingles the other night ?”

Lady Lamerton shook her head.

“No,” said his lordship, “I know it is of no use. Best say nothing. We must build our hopes on a diversion of her thoughts.”

“Yes—” Lady Lamerton mused, then heaved a sigh. “Oh, Lamerton, what a muddle you have made ! How shall we manage a garden-party when we have the public swarming all about the place ? It is a *contretemps* !”

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW IT WAS CONTRIVED.

MACDUFF did it. Macduff exerted himself over it, for Macduff was under a cloud, and endeavoured to disperse the cloud by the sunshine of amiability. Besides Macduff was a manager—would have made a superb station-master at Rugby, or President of the French Republic—any other office full of difficulty and conflicting elements would suit Macduff. He rose to the occasion.

The day for the garden-party was delightful, and the park looked its loveliest, except in early spring and late autumn, when the buds of some and the fresh green of other trees were in all shades, or when the first frosts had touched the foliage with every hue of gold and copper. These, indeed, were the times when the park and woods were in most radiant beauty ; but now, with a soft and luscious haze over the distance,

and a brilliant sun streaming light above all, it was very beautiful.

The park and the house were abandoned to the sight-seers ; but the garden, terrace, and avenue were reserved for the guests. The orange house, now empty, because the trees had been brought forth to adorn the terrace, was decorated and arranged for refreshments, or for a refuge in the event of rain.

A military band was in attendance, and four lawn-tennis courts marked out, with boys in picturesque uniforms stationed about them, to return the balls that passed beyond bounds.

At the lodge gate instructions had been given that the coachmen should deposit the guests at the garden gates—handsome, scroll iron gates under an arch of Anglo-Italian architecture, on the pediment of which were emblazoned the arms, supporters, and coronet of the Lamertons. This gate afforded admission to the garden-terrace, and completely shut off the more private part of the grounds from the park. But though the terrace was

shut off from all intrusion, it was not so completely closed as to prevent those without from seeing into it. Between the gate and the house was a low wall, with a railing on it. The windows of the state drawing-room looked out on the terrace, and a glass door with a flight of stone steps descended from the entrance hall to the terrace. The house was of the age of Elizabeth ; but one wing, that containing the state apartments, had been rebuilt or re-modelled in the reign of Queen Anne, so that it in no way harmonised with the rest of the house, though furnishing within a suite of noble and lofty apartments, cheerful, and a pleasing contrast to the somewhat sombre rooms, panelled with oak, or hung with tapestry in the older house. Orleigh was not one of those brick palaces that are found in the Midland and Eastern counties ; but it was commodious, venerable, and charmingly situated.

The arrangements made by Macduff and sanctioned by my lady, worked harmoniously. To some of her guests the hostess mentioned the inconvenience to which she

feared they would be subjected, and left them to tell the others about it, if they saw fit.

The day was so bright that there was no occasion to go indoors. Lord and Lady Lamerton stood at a short distance from the iron gates, ready to receive their guests, who, after a first greeting, walked forward and allowed their hosts to receive the next batch. They looked at the beds, the oranges, the view ; and those who were enthusiastic about flowers found their way into the conservatories. Then the guests began to coagulate into knots and sets. The clergy herded together, and the sporting men graduated towards each other ; only the army men sought out and made themselves agreeable to the ladies.

“Where is Arminell?” asked Lady Lamerton, in an interval between the reception of guests.

“’Pon my soul, Julia, I do not know.”

“She ought to be here—with us. She puts the obligations of common courtesy from her as undeserving of attention.”

“ I will send for her.”

“ No ; best take no notice. She may appear presently. Here come the Cribbages.”

“ My dear Lady Lamerton,” exclaimed the rector’s wife, running up, and in a gushing manner extending her hand. “ How bright and charming you look, in spite of all your worries. It is a marvel to me how you bear up under it all ; and to think of the audacity of Jingles ! the ingratitude, the presumption ! So he is turned out of the house, neck and crop ; and yet you look as fresh and smiling as if nothing had happened. How I do envy your placidity of temper.”

Then, turning to Lord Lamerton. “ Really, my lord, you are an angel of good-nature to allow the public admission to your beautiful grounds twice a week, and put yourself and your guests to annoyance to oblige them. I heard the particulars from Mrs. Macduff. Come, Robert ”—this to her husband—“ you must not detain our kind hosts. Don’t you see that the Calwoodleighs are coming ? By the way, dear Lady Lamerton, where is Miss Inglett ? Shall I find her on the terrace ?

What dress is she wearing? There are so many persons here that I may miss her among the throng. Which dress is it? The heliotrope or the amber?"

She was drawn on by her husband, who saw that the Calwoodleighs were waiting to be received. "Come along, Selena," said the rector. "I see the archdeacon yonder."

"I'm not going to be hurried, Robert," answered Mrs. Cribbage, "I must have another word presently with my lord. You may leave me if you like. You are not wont to be civil to your wife. Besides, I know why you want to be off. It is very fine pretending you have something to say to the archdeacon; I know what is the attraction in that direction, his niece, Miss Lovat, whom some think pretty. But I don't. Go and prance about the archdeacon and her, if you like."

The Calwoodleighs having gone forward, Mrs. Cribbage returned to her hosts, and said to Lord Lamerton:

"How good and kind it was of you, my lord, to put in an appearance at poor Arche-

laus Tubb's funeral. I have no doubt the family were flattered by the extraordinary attention, and to be sure, what nasty, spiteful things have been said about your share in his death. Now, Robert, I will go with you and engage Miss Lovat whilst you talk to the archdeacon."

The arrival of the guests had in the meantime caused great satisfaction to the sight-seers, who had discussed and severely criticised the equipages.

The meeting at Patience Kite's cottage had been reported in the papers, the speech by Welsh given as he chose that it should be read, that of Saltren omitted altogether. Moreover, the county papers had announced the throwing open of the grounds on Saturday, and as this was a day of early closing, a good many townsfolk, mostly shopmen and shopgirls, took advantage of the occasion to come to Orleigh, and see the place where that notorious Lord Lamerton lived.

They clustered about the garden gates, passing their comments on the arrivals, mostly

disparaging, and expressed at times loud enough to be heard by those discussed.

One or two parties arrived in hired conveyances. "Them's too poor to keep a carriage," was the observation with which they were saluted. The rector and Mrs. Cribbage came on foot. "These can't afford a cab. Curate and his old housekeeper, won't they eat!"

By far the most stylish and astonishing was the equipage of Sir Bosanquet Gammon, the new high sheriff. Sir Bosanquet was a north-country man who had made a large fortune as a civil engineer. He was never able altogether to shake off his native dialect and to speak as an educated English gentleman. This was the more singular, as he asserted that the family was originally De Gammon, and had Plantagenet blood in it. His coat-of-arms on carriage and yacht was a patchwork of quarterings. That Plantagenet blood and fifty heiresses should not by their fused gentility have prevented Gammon from talking with a north-country twang was something to shake the foundations of Anthropology.

Sir Bosanquet Gammon, being high sheriff, thought it incumbent on him to make a display, so he drove to Orleigh in a carriage with hammercloth, and powdered coachman and flunkeys.

Giraldus Cambrensis, in his "Topography of Ireland," says that in Meath, near Foure, are three lakes, each occupied by a special kind of fish, and he adds that, although these lakes are connected, the fish of each lake keep to themselves, and should they venture into the lake inhabited by the finny tribe of another species, they would be so like fish out of water, that they would die, unless indeed they precipitately retreated to their former habitation.

It also seemed at Orleigh this day that fish... of three sorts were swimming about in three several ponds without association and amalgamation. Within the iron gates and rails were the red-fleshed salmon, by themselves, with interests in common, a common mode of speech, a common code of manner, and a common culture. Without the railings, yet within the park, were the common-place fish

that understood and appreciated jokes which would have been insipid or vulgar to those within the railings, also with a common dialect, a peculiar twang and intonation of voice, and a common style of thought and cultural tone.

Further away, outside the park gates and enclosure were fish of another quality altogether, the homely trout—the village rustics, the miners out of work—also with their peculiar modes of thought, their dialect, their prejudices, and their quality of humour, distinct from the rest and special to themselves.

How would one of the town fish have felt, had he been admitted within the gates? How one of the rustics, if associated with the shop-folk? Each would have been uneasy, gasping, and glad to get back from such uncongenial society into his proper pond once more.

When the last of the guests had arrived, Lord and Lady Lamerton left their reception post, and mixed with the company. The lookers-on outside the railings did not at once disperse. A policeman and a couple of keepers were on guard. The gates were closed, but the people insisted on peering

through the bars and between the rails at the well-dressed gentle class within, and others scrambled up on the dwarf wall to obtain a better view, and were ordered down by the policeman only to reascend to the vantage point when his back was turned.

“ I ain’t doing nothing,” remonstrated one of those required to descend, “ a cat may look at a king, and I want to see Lord Lamerton.”

“ Come down at once.”

“ But I came here o’ purpose.”

“ You can see the park and the pictures.”

“ Oh, blow the park and pictures. I didn’t pay two-and-eight return to see them. I came here to see his lordship. So, Mr. Bobby, take him my card and compliments. I’m in the Bespoke Department at Messrs. Skewés.”

“ You cannot see him. Come down at once.”

“ But I must and will see the nobleman who has been so wicked, and has caused such wretchedness, who has tore down widows’ houses, and crushed the ’eads of orphans.”

Then another man offered a cigar to one of the keepers.

“Look here, old man,” he said. “Point his lordship out to me. I want to have a squint at him—a regular Judge Jeffries he is.”

“Talk of Bulgarian atrocities,” said another. “They’re a song to these at Orleigh. Down with the House of Lords, says I, and let us have the enfranchisement of the soil.”

“It is all primogeniture does it,” said a third, “there never ought to be no first-borns.”

In the innermost pond, meanwhile, the guests were swimming about and consorting. Mrs. Cribbage bore down on Lady Lamerton.

“Do tell me, dear Lady Lamerton, where is Miss Arminell; I have been searching for her everywhere. Don’t tell me she is ill. Though, perhaps, she has had occasion to feel upset. She really must be somewhere, but I am so short-sighted I have not been able to find her. Perhaps she is in a new dress, with which I am not acquainted.”

“We are going to send her to town; her aunt, Lady Hermione Woodhead, has been

so kind as to invite her, as we remain at Orleigh for the time, and do not think of being in town during the season. It would be a pity for Arminell not to see the Academy this year, and hear the Italian opera, and see some of our friends. So when Lady Hermione offered it, we accepted gladly."

"Very gladly, I am sure," said Mrs. Cribbage with a knowing twinkle in her eye. "But where is she now?"

"I cannot say, I have not looked for her; I have been intent on receiving our friends. Here is Lady Gammon. I must be civil to her."

"How propitious the weather is," said the high sherifness, "and how gratified you must be, my lady, to see so many individuals about you in the plentitude of enjoyment."

There are persons, they belong to a certain social class, who always use a long word from the Latin when a short Anglo-Saxon one would do.

"What a superabundance of ministers, all, I perceive, of the Established Church; but really, considering the high sheriff was to be

here, they might have come in hats, instead of what is vulgarly called wide-awakes. Do you know, my lady, what it is that I really want of you? Can you guess what the favour is that I am going to ask of you? No—I am sure you cannot. Sir Bosanquet and I had a discussion together at breakfast relative to the polarisation of light, and I said to Sir Bosanquet—” (within parenthesis be it noted that before the civil engineer was knighted, his wife always called him hub or hubby)—“ I said to Sir Bosanquet, ‘ my dear, we will refer the matter to her ladyship who is a very learned lady, and she shall decide.’ ”

“ I ! ” answered Lady Lamerton, “ I really do not know. It has—that is—I believe it has—but really I have only the vaguest idea concerning it ; it has to do with the breaking up of a ray into its prismatic colours.”

“ I knew it had to do with prismatic colours, and had nothing to do with polar bears. Polar bears are white.”

“ Thomson,” said Lady Lamerton aside to

a footman, “be so good as to send me Miss Inglett’s maid—to me here, on the terrace.”

A few minutes later the lady’s maid came to where my lady was standing ; she held a salver with a three-cornered sealed note on it.

“Please, my lady, Thomson said your ladyship——”

“Yes,” interrupted Lady Lamerton, “what have you got there ?”

“A note, my lady, Miss Inglett left on her dressing table for his lordship, before she went.”

“Went !”

“Started, my lady, for town to Lady Hermione Woodhead’s. She said, my lady, she would write for me when I was required.”

Lady Lamerton took the note. It was addressed to her husband, but she hastily opened it. It contained these few lines only—

“DEAR PAPA,

“You said it would be best for you and for my step-mother, and for myself, if I went

away for some time from Orleigh. I have gone—but not to Aunt Hermione. You can, of course, guess who accompanies me, one whom I trust ere long you will acknowledge as a son. I will write in a day or two.

“Yours ever,
“Arminell.”

Lady Lamerton did not lose her presence of mind. “That will do,” she said to the maid, and went in quest of her husband. She showed him the letter and said in a low tone, “No time is to be lost ; go instantly, go yourself to Chillacot, and see if she be there. If not you can learn where *he* is. No one else can go. I will keep the company amused and occupied. Slip out by the gate at the end of the avenue and go over the down, no one will observe you.”

Lord Lamerton nodded, and departed without a word. Presently up came Mrs. Cribbage again, “I cannot find Miss Inglett anywhere,” she said.

“No, Mrs. Cribbage,” answered Lady Lamerton. “How are you likely to when she is gone to town? Did not I tell you

that we had accepted Lady Hermione's kind invitation ? ”

“ But I did not understand she was gone. I thought she was going.”

“ Surely you misunderstood me, Mrs. Cribbage ; here comes Sir Bosanquet.”

“ There now,” exclaimed Lady Gammon, sailing up with a flutter of silk, and a waving of lace fringe to her parasol. “ There I said so, Sir Bosanquet, polarisation of light has nothing to do with polar bears. I bought Plantagenet a box of the prismatical colours because they are warranted to contain no deleterious matter in them, should the dear child take to ”—there was no Latinised word that would suit, or that she knew—“ to suck 'em.”

“ Oh Lady Gammon,” said the hostess, “ I am so vexed that I cannot introduce to you my step-daughter, but she has been invited to her aunt's, Lady Hermione Woodhead, and there is a Richter concert to-night—selections from Parzifal, which she ought not to miss.”

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW THE FISH CAME TOGETHER.

LADY LAMERTON did her utmost. She was lively, quite sprightly even. She moved among her guests with a pleasant smile and a courteous word for every one. The lawn-tennis courts were occupied by four sets of players. A cluster of young men and girls were at a table blowing soap bubbles, and finding fun for laughter in the process. A group of their seniors were making a party for bowls. Some of the guests stood on the terrace looking down at the lawn-tennis players and pretending to take interest in the games. The majority of those present wandered about the gardens, shrubberies, and conservatories.

A little hand was thrust into that of Lady Lamerton, and on looking down she saw Giles.

“Mamma, where is papa? I want to go with him.”

“He has had to leave, dear, for a few minutes; he will return in perhaps half an hour.”

“But I can run after him. Where is he?”

“You cannot follow him, Giles, he is walking fast, and is about something that your presence would disturb. Are there no little boys here for you to play with? Yes, there are the two Fountaynes. I invited them expressly.”

“I do not want to play. I had rather walk with papa.”

“But he would wish you to take the little boys and show them your pony. We cannot, my dear, always do what we like. We must bestir ourselves to make our guests happy.”

“Very well, mamma, I will go with the Fountaynes as papa wishes it.”

He let go her hand, and went off. She looked affectionately after the child for a moment, and then resumed her duties as hostess, with an anxious heart but an untroubled brow.

From the first moment that our intelligence dawns, the first lessons impressed on us, lessons never pretermitted, from which no holiday gives release, relentlessly and systematically enforced, are those of self-suppression. We are not allowed as children even to express our opinions decidedly, to hate heartily any person or anything. We are required, for instance, to say nothing more forcible than—we are not devoted to our governess, and not partial to bread-and-butter pudding. We are instructed either to keep silence altogether relative to our feelings, which is best of all, a counsel of perfection ; or if we cannot do that, to give utterance to them in an inoffensive and unobjectionable manner. We are taught to speak of a stupid person as amiable, and of a disagreeable person as well-intentioned. Our faces are not suffered to express what our tongues are not permitted to speak, consequently the facial muscles are brought into as complete control as the tongue.

Consequently also when we are thoroughly schooled, we wear masks perpetually and

always go about with gloved tongues. At first, in the nursery and in the schoolroom, there are kicks and sulks, when the mask and the glove are fitted on, and yet, in time, we become so habituated to them that we are incapable of conceiving of life as endurable without the wearing of them.

I know that I have become so accustomed to a ring on my little finger, that if perchance I have forgotten it, and gone into society, I have blushed to the roots of my hair, and stammered and been distracted, thinking myself insufficiently clothed, simply because I had left my ring on the washhand-stand. And it is the same with our masks and gloves, we grow to like them, to be uncomfortable without them, to be afraid to show our faces or move our tongues when unprotected by mask and glove.

A circus horse becomes so used to the bearing rein that even when he is allowed to gallop without one, he runs with arched neck.

We are all harnessed from our cradle, with bearing reins, not only to give our necks the

proper curve, but also to prevent us from taking the bit in our mouths, kicking out, plunging over the barriers, and deserting the ring, and the saw-dust, the lights, and the crack of the manager's whip.

Round and round our ring we go, now at an amble, then at a canter, and at last at a gallop, but always under restraint ; the only liberty allowed and taken is now and again to make our hoofs sound against the barriers, and to send a little sawdust in the faces of the lookers-on, who clap hands and laugh or scream. We dance in our arena to music, and spin about, and balance ourselves on precarious bases, take a five-barred gate at a leap and go over a score of white poles, dexterously lowered to allow of a leap without accident. Then we fall lame, and lie down, and allow a pistol to be exploded in our ears, and permit ourselves to be carried out as dead. But whatever jump we make has been pre-arranged and laboriously practised, and whatever performance we be put through has been artificially acquired. We never snap our bearing rein, never utter

a defiant snort, toss our heads, kick out at those who would detain us, and dash away to pastures green and free moorside.

Possibly our happiness would be greater were we to burst away from the perpetual mill-round, but I know very well what the result would be. We would rapidly degenerate on the moorside into uncouth, shaggy creatures, destitute of gloss and grace, and forget all our circus manners.

That which the grooming and breaking-in are to a horse, that culture is to a man, a sacrifice of freedom. The lower classes of men, the great undisciplined, or imperfectly disciplined bulk of mankind look on at the easy motions and trained grace of the higher classes, with much the same puzzlement as would a cluster of wild ponies stand and watch the passing of a cavalcade of elaborately trained horses. Both would be equally ignorant of the amount of self-abnegation and submission to rule which go to give ease and gloss.

According to a Mussulman legend, the Queen of Sheba had some smack of savagery

about her ; she had goats' hair on her ankles. King Solomon heard this by report, and being desirous of ascertaining the truth, he had water poured over the pavement of his court when she came to visit him. As she approached she raised her skirt, and Solomon detected the goats' hair.

There are a good many men as well as women who appear in the best courts nowadays with hair about their hocks ; they have been insufficiently groomed. But in this they differ from the Queen of Sheba, that they persistently show us their hocks, and even thrust them in our faces. Merciful powers ! how many half-broken, ill-trimmed cobs I have met with, kicking up their undocked heels, showing us that they can jump over poles and overleap hurdles, that they can balance themselves on chairs, and dance and rear on their hind legs, and paw the air, and whinny for applause. We politely pat our palms, and look all the while, not at their antics, but at their hocks, not at all impressed with their silver and spangled trappings, but very conscious of the hair about their hoofs.

It is the fashion for moralists to hold up their hands, and shake their heads, and declaim against the artificialities, the disguises of social life, and to say that every word spoken and look given should be sincere ; that men and women should scorn concealment and hate subterfuge. But—would the world be tolerable were it so constituted? I mean the world of men. Is it so in the world of nature? Is that above screens and disguises? Is that ruthlessly true, and offensively genuine in its operations? Where is there not manifest a desire to draw the veil over what is harsh and unbecoming? The very earth covers her bald places with verdure, obscures her wounds and drapes her ragged edges. So the function of culture is the softening of what is rough, the screening of what is unseemly, the disguising of all that may occasion pain. It is nothing else but charity in its most graceful form, that spares another at the cost of self.

I have been in a volcanic region where there were innumerable craters, great and

small. Those on the plain, hardly rising above a few feet out of it, showed all their bare horror, their torn lips, their black throats, their sides bristling with the angular lava that had boiled out of their hot and angry hearts, long ago, but ever showing. They were perfectly genuine, expressing their true nature in ugly nakedness. But there were other volcanoes rising to mountain heights, and these had mantled themselves in snow, had choked and smoothed over their clefts, and hung garlands of silver, and dropped gauzy veils over their vitreous precipices; the very craters, the sources of the fire, were filled to the brim and heaped up to overflow with unsullied snow, rising white, rounded, innocent, as a maiden's bosom. Which was best? I know which was the pleasantest to see.

So is it with humanity. We are all volcanoes with fire in our hearts. Some have broken forth and torn themselves to pieces, some are in a chronic state of fume, and dribble lava and splutter cinders perpetually, and others are exhausted. Surely it is best to hide

our fires, and drape our savagery, and bury our snags and dust the white snow over all that is rugged and gloomy and ungentle.

Or—to revert to our former illustration, if we have hair on our heels, which is best, to expose it, or, like the Queen of Sheba, let down our skirts over it?

When our temper is ruffled, we do not fret with it those we meet—when our heart is bitter, we do not spit our gall in the faces of our friends—when our blood boils in our veins we are careful to let none of it squirt on and blister the hand that is extended to us. A man may smile, and smile, and be a villain—that is true, but a man or a woman may smile, and smile, and be exceedingly sorrowful, may dance and laugh with an aching heart. Who does not remember Andersen's story of the little mermaid, who obtained from the witch power to shed her squamous tail at the cost of feeling knives pierce her soles every footstep she took? And the little mermaid danced at the prince's wedding—at the wedding of the prince whom she had once held to her heart, and for the love

of whom she had shed her fish's tail, and danced with a rosy face, though every step was a mortal agony. Do we not love and venerate the little mermaid, because, instead of howling or whining, and holding up her bleeding soles to extract commiseration from all, she dropped her skirts over them, and danced and warbled, and flushed as the rose, so that none supposed she leaped with pain, and sang to still her heart, and flushed with stress of anguish? So is it with all who have gone through the great discipline of culture, they no more expose their wounds and cry out for sympathy than they expose deformities.

I remember the bridge over the Gave at Pau, on each side of which through its entire length sat beggars exhibiting sores and soliciting alms. But these were men and women in rags, and those who wear only the rags of culture do the same, they draw aside their tatters and expose their wounds to our shocked eyes.

But it is not so with such as have gone through the school and learnt its lessons.

They are not for ever obtruding themselves, their worries, their distresses on every one they meet, their own proper self with its torn veins, and festering grief, and distilling blood is folded over with silk, and a jewelled brooch clasps the lace over the swelling, suffering bosom, and all who see it admire the jewels and are kept in ignorance of what is beneath. In the primitive Church the *disciplina arcani* was enforced, the doctrine of holy reserve taught ; for there were certain mysteries of which the faithful were required to keep the secret ; and culture, modern culture, has also its *disciplina arcani*, its doctrine of reserve, a reserve to be observed on all selfish pains and sorrows, a mantling over with a cloak of mystery everything which can jar with the pleasure and the cheerfulness and the brightness of the day to others.

So, with a heart quivering with apprehension and racked with grief for Arminell, Lady Lamerton moved about the terrace with a placid face, and with her thoughts apparently engrossed wholly in making her guests at

home and happy. She insisted on Sir Bosanquet Gammon and the rector playing at aunt Sally, whilst Lady Gammon looked on with a face green with horror. She brought a garden chair herself to old and tottery Mrs. Calwoodleigh, who was standing looking on at her daughter playing lawn tennis. She found a timid little cluster of husband and wife and daughters, fresh arrivals in the neighbourhood, and knowing no one, and introduced them to a dozen nice families. She broke up a flirtation with a young officer, which she thought undesirable, by sweeping away with her the young lady into the orchid house to admire a clump of *Dissa grandiflora*. She interrupted a political discussion in the nick of time, before the parties became angry and personal. She singled out a little old maid outrageously dressed, who was prowling about the flowers, and delighted her by presents of cuttings and little pots of bulbs, more than she could carry, but which the gardener was bidden convey to Miss Bligh's carriage. She galvanised into life a drooping cluster of young

and smooth parsons, and set them playing La Crosse with as many charming girls. She pointed out the tables where were claret and champagne cups, strawberries and cream, to certain thirsty and heavy souls which had been gravitating sideways in that direction for some time. She caught an antiquary, and carried him off to the end of the garden to show him a Romano-British stone with ogams nicked at the angle, which had been discovered used as a footbridge, and set up by Lord Lamerton to save it from destruction.

“Here, Mr. Fothergill, I must leave you to copy the inscription. Lady Gammon is anxious to have the polarisation of light explained, and I must take her to the library for an encyclopædia—fortunately the study to-day is not invaded by the public.”

Behind her back many a remark was made on her excellence as a hostess, her cheerfulness, her amiability. Every one liked Lady Lamerton ; they could not fail to do so, she took such pains to make herself agreeable. Only Arminell despised her, and despised

her for those very qualities which won to her the hearts of her acquaintances. Arminell thought her lacking in depth and sincerity. It was true that she was without intensity of conviction, but that was characteristic of breadth ; it was true that she was unreal, and that was part of her culture ; so to some folks everything is unreal but Zolaism, the Morgue, discourtesy, breach of good manners, the refuse heap. Man is unreal clothed in skin, the only genuine man is he who has been excoriated, with every nerve and muscle and vein exposed ; the canvas only is real, not the Madonna di San Sisto looking with her ineffably earnest eyes out of it ; lamp-black and treacle and old rags are the reality, not the Book of Psalm and Song, printed out of the former on the transubstantiated latter ; catgut and deal and brass only are real, not the symphony of Beethoven, not the march from the Kemenate in "Lohengrin," played on the instruments manufactured out of these vulgar materials. The pelting rain is real, not the gilded evening cloud that contains the stored moisture ;

in a word, that only is real, and commendable, and to be observed, which is gross material, offensive. I know that the sweetness and fragrance of that old culture which was but another name, as I have already said, for charity, is passing away, like the rising incense, perhaps again to be caught and scented only in the courts of heaven. I know that it is in fashion now to be rude and brusque, and to deny oneself no freedom, and exercise on oneself no restraint, so as to be quite natural. But what is that save to revert to social Adamanism and Bosjesmanism—to savagery in its basest and nastiest form—to renounce the form as well as the power of culture.

Phædrus tells in one of his fables of an old woman who found an empty amphora of old Falernian wine; she put her nose to the mouth and snuffed and said, “If you smell so sweet when void, how sweet you must be when full.”

Well! let us say that half the politeness and grace and charm of society is unreal. It is the aroma of the old Falernian. How

much better, no doubt, if the vessel be full of that most precious old Falernian, that perfect courtesy of heart which suffereth long and is kind ; vaunteth not itself, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, believeth all things, loveth all things, endureth all things. But, I ask, is not an empty amphora of Falernian more grateful than one full of asafoetida ?

The evening light slanted over the park, making the grass yellow as corn, and casting purple shadows behind the elms. The front of the house toward the terrace was glorified, the plate glass windows gleamed as if rolled out of sunlight. The terrace was alive with people in their gayest dresses, in light summer colours, pink and turquoise, strawberry, spring green, crimson and cream. The band was playing, and the scarlet uniforms of the military formed a brilliant patch of colour at the end of the terrace against a bank of yews.

Below the terrace was the tennis-court, reached by a flight of several steps, and against the wall that upheld the terrace roses

were trained, and were in masses of flower, scenting the air.

The lawn-tennis ground formed a second terrace banked up from the park which sloped away rapidly thence to the winding river Ore.

In the midst of the flower-beds and moving coloured kaleidoscope of figures on the gravelled terrace was a fountain and a basin. In the latter floated water-lilies, and gold fish darted, and carried off the crumbs cast to them. The water that leaped out of a triton's shell was turned in the evening sun as it fell, into amethysts.

Away, across the valley, stood the little church with its tower peeping out of limes, now all alight with the western sun ; and the cock on its top was turned to a bird of fire.

“ Hark ! ” exclaimed the rector, “ I hear our bell. Good heaven ! Surely I've not forgotten—I did not know there was to be a funeral. I did not know any one was ill—in danger. It is tolling.”

Then the band, which had rested for a

moment and shaken the moisture out of their wind instruments, and cleared their throats with iced ale, came to attention as the conductor rattled his staff on the music-stand, and beat, one, two, three, four! Then with a blast and crash and rattle—

“Se-e-e the conquer-ing her-er-er-er-er-o comes,
Sou-ou-ound the trum-pets,
Be-e-eat the drums.”

At that moment, again, a little hand was thrust into that of Lady Lamerton, and again she saw her boy, Giles, at her side. He was looking pale, and was crying.

“What is the matter, Giles? You are shivering. Have you taken a chill? Go indoors, dear.”

“Mamma,” said the boy, “I want papa. I have shown the Fountayne boys my pony and the horses, and my goat, and rabbits, whatever I thought papa would like them to see, and now I want papa. Where is papa?”

“My dear, you must go indoors. What is that? In pity—what is going on? Surely

the public are not going to invade the terrace."

Yes—they were.

A large party had been shown the state apartments, had looked at the pictures, tried the sofas, made jokes over the family portraits, attempted to finger the china, and then had assembled at the drawing-room windows which commanded the terrace and the lawn-tennis courts.

"Seeing the 'ouse without the master, is like 'Amlet with the part of 'Amlet left out," observed one of the sight-seers. "I say, flunkey, point us out the noble lord, and I'll tip you a copper."

"Gentlemen and ladies," said the august butler, "I must request that you will not press to the windows. It is time to move on. There is another party waiting to go over the house."

"Ah! but suppose we don't choose to move on, Old Heavy? Ain't the place open to us? Was any time specified for us to be trotted out? Show us the statute," laughed a lawyer's clerk.

However, after some urging and remonstrance, the throng was got outside the state drawing-room, into the entrance hall.

“ I say, you coves ! ” shouted the young man from the bespoke department of Messrs. Skewés, “ Follow me, and I will get you a sight of his lordship and all the blue-blooded aristocrats below.”

He led the way, and was followed at a run to the glass door opening upon the steps that descended to the terrace ; the rush was so sudden that the butler had not time or thought to interpose.

“ Hark ! ” called the lawyer’s clerk. “ By George, if the band ain’t doing us the compliment by anticipation of striking up ‘ See the conquering hero comes ! ’ which means us—the British public. Lend a shove, Tommy, and we’ll be down among them and have some ices and sherry cobbler too, and take a squint at the noble lord himself.”

A united thrust against the double glass doors drove them apart, and down the steps, and out upon the terrace poured the Public.

At that same moment the iron gates were

swung apart, and another party entered through them—not of the sight-seers, but villagers in their working clothes and shirt-sleeves.

“See-e-e the conquer-ing her-er-er-er-o comes,
Sou-ou-ound the trum-pets,
Be-e-eat the drums.”

The conductor of the band looked round, and what he saw made him hold up his staff. The music instantly ceased.

Also, simultaneously, all talking among the guests ceased.

Also, instantaneously, the sight-seers who had been jostling one another, and laughing loudly, and egging one another on, and were pouring down the steps, halted and ceased to be heard.

Nothing, indeed, was heard but the toll of the distant bell, and the crunch of the gravel under the feet of the advancing party of villagers.

The fish of the three ponds had mixed for once, and were silent in the presence of the all-conquering hero to whom all submit—Death.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HOW IT CAME ABOUT.

“I WONDER now,” said Mrs. Saltren to herself, “whatever has made the raspberry jam so mouldy? Was the fruit wet when it was picked? I cannot remember. If it was, it weren’t my fault, but the weather on which no one can depend. I wanted to send up some to Tryphœna Welsh, but now I can’t, unless I spoon off the mould on the top of one and fill up from the bottom of another. It is a pity and a waste of confidence and a sapping of faith when one goes, makes jam, and spends coals and sugar and a lot of perspiration, and gets nothing for it but mould an inch thick. I must send Tryphœna Welsh something, for if Giles, as he tells me, has gone to take up with writing for the papers, he’ll need the help of James, and there’s no way of getting at men’s hearts but through their stomachs. It was tiresome

Giles writing to my brother and not saying a word to me about it. I could have told him James was not in town, so no need for him to address a letter to him at Shepherd's Bush; he went after seeing us, to stay with one literary friend and then another, so he won't have Giles' letter till he returns to town. That accounts for my boy receiving no answer. Giles never saw him when he was here, which was tiresome. It is vexing too about the hams. I'd have sent one up to James, if they had not been spoiled, along of the knuckles being outside the bags, so that the flies walked in as they might at a house door. I pickled those hams in treacle and ale and juniper. I made paper bags for them, and what more could I do? It was no fault of mine if the hams got spoiled. It was the fault of the hams being too big for my paper bags, so that the bone stuck out. And then the weather—it was encouraging to the flies. After the raspberry jam and the hams, one wants comfort. I'll get a drop."

But before she had reached the corner

cupboard, the door opened, and her husband came in, looking more strange, white, and wild than ever. He staggered to the table, rolling in his walk as if he were drunk, and held to the furniture to stay himself, fearing to take a step unsupported. His face was so livid, his eyes so full of something like terror, that a thrill of fear ran through Mrs. Saltren—she thought he was mad.

“What is it, Saltren? Why do you look at me in that fashion? I was not going to my cupboard for anything but my knitting. I said to myself, I will knit a warm jersey for Giles against the winter, and I put the pins and the wool in there. Now don’t look so queer. Are you ill?”

“Marianne,” he said slowly, then drew a long breath that sounded hoarsely in his throat as he inhaled it, “Marianne, you are avenged.”

“What do you mean? Are you referring to the hams or the raspberry jam?”

“Marianne,” he repeated, “the word has come to pass. The hand has been stretched forth and has smitten the evil doer. The

mighty is cast out of his seat and laid even with the dust."

"I don't know what you're a-talking about, Stephen. I concern myself about common things, and about prophecy no more than I do about moonshine. The jams get mouldy and the hams ain't fit to eat."

"Did I not tell you, Marianne, of what I saw and heard that Sabbath day?"

"I gave no heed to it."

"It is fulfilled. The purposes of heaven fulfil themselves in a wonderful and unexpected way when we are least awaiting it. He is dead."

"Who is dead?"

"Lord Lamerton."

"Lord Lamerton!" Marianne Saltren started.

"How is it that? Where, Stephen, and when?"

"He is lying dead beneath the cliff."

"Good heavens! How came that about?"

"He was cast down by the hand of an avenging justice. You have been avenged."

“ I—I have nothing to complain of—to have avenged on Lord Lamerton.”

“ Nothing of late, but you told me of the dishonour, of the wrong——”

Mrs. Saltren uttered a cry of horror.

“ Stephen, for God’s sake!—you do not mean?—you know, you know that I named no names.”

“ I knew, Marianne, to whom you referred. I knew it at once. Then I understood why you gave your son the Christian name he bears.”

“ Oh, Stephen, it was not that.”

“ Yes, Marianne, it was. It all hangs together. I saw how he, Lord Lamerton, was constrained to make much of the boy, to spend money on him, to educate and make a gentleman of him, and take him into his house.”

“ Stephen! Stephen! this is all a mistake.”

“ No, Marianne, it is no mistake. I see it all as plainly as I saw the angel flying in the midst of heaven bearing the Everlasting Gospel in his right hand, which he cast into the water before me.”

“ I was talking nonsense. I am—Oh, Stephen ! What did you say ?—he—Lord Lamerton is not dead ? ”

“ He is dead. He is lying dead on the path.”

Mrs. Saltren was seized with a fit of trembling, as if an ague were come over her. She stared at her husband, terror stricken, and could not speak. A horrible thought, a sickening dread, had swept over her, and she shrank from asking a question which might receive an answer confirming her half-formulated fears.

“ The judgment has tarried long, but the sentence has overtaken the sinner at last. Now, after all, he has been made to suffer for what he once did to you. He cast you down, and with like measure has it been meted to him. He is cast down.”

“ He did nothing to me.”

“ You are ready to forgive him now, and to forget the past, because you are a Christian. But eternal justice never forgets, it waits and watches, and when least expected, strikes down.”

“ Oh, Stephen! What are you thinking of? You listened to my idle talk. You fancy that Lord Lamerton was—was the father of Giles, but he was not. Indeed, indeed he was not.”

“ He was not ! ” echoed the captain, standing stiffly with outstretched arms and clenched fists, a queer ungainly figure, jointless, as if made of wooden sticks. “ You yourself told me that he was.”

“ I named no names. Indeed I never said he was—why, Stephen, how could he have been, when you know as well as I do, that he was out of England for three years at that time ; he was *attaché* as they call it at the embassy in—I forget, some German Court, whilst I was at Orleigh with the dowager Lady Lamerton.”

The captain stood still, thinking ; as one frozen and fast to the spot.

“ Besides,” put in the woman, with a flicker of her old inordinate vanity and falsehood, in spite of her present fear, “ you think very bad of me if you suppose I’d have took up with any one less than a viscount.”

A long silence ensued, in which the tick of the clock sounded loudly and harshly.

“Marianne,” he said at last, hoarsely.

“It is all your fault and stupidity,” said his wife hastily. “You have no judgment, and a brain on fire with religious craze. If you would but behave like an ordinary, sensible man and think reasonably, you would never have fallen into this mistake. You had only to think a moment reasonably, and you’d know that it was not, and could not be a man, and he only the honourable, and like to be no better than a baron, many hundred miles away at a foreign court, and the postage then not twopence ha’penny as ’tis now.”

“Marianne,” said Saltren again hoarsely, and he took a step nearer to her, and grasped her wrist. “Marianne, answer me,” Saltren spoke with a wild flicker in his eyes as though jack-o’-lanterns were dancing over those deep mysterious pools, “as you will have to answer at the great day of account—is Giles *not* the son of Lord Lamerton?”

“Of course not, I never said so. Who but a fool would suppose he was, and a

week's post and foreign languages between? He never left—Munich I think it was, but it may have been Munchausen, and I never left Orleigh all the three years. Besides—I never said it was. I named no names."

Now a shudder ran through Saltren, a convulsive quake, but it was over instantaneously. Then, with his iron hand he pressed the woman's wrist downwards.

"Kneel," he said, "kneel."

"You are hurting me, Stephen! let go!"

"Kneel," he repeated, "kneel."

He forced her from her feet to her knees, before him, she was too frightened to disobey; and her vain efforts to parry reproof, and lay the blame on him, had been without success, he had not noticed even the mean evasions.

"Marianne," he said solemnly, in his deepest, most tremulous tones. "Tell me—who was the father of Giles?"

"That I will not—never—no, I cannot tell."

"You shall, I will hold you here, with my

hand clenched, and not let you go--No, never, not all the coming night, not all next day, all the night following—for ever, and ever, until you confess.”

She stooped towards the floor, to hide her face from his searching eyes, with the lambent flame in them that frightened her. Then she looked furtively towards the window, and next to the door, into the back kitchen, seeking means of escape.

“It is in vain for you to try to get away,” said the captain slowly. “Here I hold you, and tighten my grasp, till you scream out the truth. They used to do that in England. They slipped the hands in iron gloves and the feet in iron boots, and screwed till the blood ran out of fingers and foot-ends, and the criminal told the truth. So will I screw the truth out of you, out of your hands. You cannot escape. Was the father of Giles a nobleman?”

“He was not the highest of all—not a duke.”

“What was he then?”

She was silent, and strove to twist her

hands away. He held both now. He compressed his clutch. She cried out, "I cannot bear this."

"What was his title?"

"You are hurting me, Stephen."

"Was he a nobleman at all?"

With hesitation, and another writhe to get away—"N—no."

"Then, all that story you told of the deception practised upon you was a lie?"

"Not a lie—it was a joke. James was not such a fool as you, he took it as such. But you—"

Then Stephen Saltren drew his wife to her feet, and strode to the door, dragging her with him. She screamed. She supposed he was about to kill her; but he turned, and said gloomily, "I will not hurt you, I want to show you what you have done—with your *joke*."

He forced open the door, and drew her through the garden, out at the wicket gate, along the path up the coombe. There were two ways thence to Orleigh Park, one down the coombe to the main valley and high-road,

and round a shoulder of hill ; the other way by a steep climb up a zig-zag path in the side of the hill to the top of the crag, thence over a stretch of some thirty acres of furzy down into the plantations and so into the park through them. The tortuous ascent began at the cottage, Chillacot, but Saltren drew his wife past the point whence it rose to where the evening sun cast the black shadow of the crag or "cleave" across the glen, and there—lying on broken, fallen stones, with his hands outstretched, his face to the clear sky, lay Lord Lamerton, dead.

Marianne Saltren cowered back, she was too frightened by what she saw to care to approach ; but her husband's vice-like grasp did not relax for all her weeping and entreaties. He compelled her to come close to the fallen man.

His finger ends buried themselves in her wrists, and checked her pulse, that her hands became numb, and tingled.

He remained silent, for long, looking at the dead man, his own face scarcely less white, his muscles hardly less rigid, his

features as set, and more drawn. There was no sunlight in the narrow valley where they stood under the great slate cleave, but above at the edge of the opposite hill were gorse bushes so covered with golden bloom that they seemed to be but one yellow flower, and on them the evening sun rested lovingly. Above, ghost-like in the blue sky, was a filmy disc—the moon, only perceivable from the deep valley, unseen by those who stood in the sunlight. The rooks were congregating in the wood at the bottom of the valley. That wood was a favourite resort to which the birds from several rookeries came every evening before set of sun, and chattered incessantly, and made as much noise as if they were members of the House of Commons discussing Irish matters. The sound issuing from that wood was strident like the rattle of a lawn-mower.

A blue-bottle fly was buzzing round the dead man. Saltren saw it, it made him uneasy ; he let go one of his wife's hands and with his disengaged hand drew his kerchief from his throat, a black silk one, and

whisked it to and fro, to drive away the insect. “I cannot tell,” he said, “heaven knows. If it had not been for what you said, for your amusing joke, he might now be living. I cannot tell. The ways of Providence are dark. We are but instruments used, and not knowing for what purpose used. I cannot tell.”

He put the kerchief to his face and wiped it.

“I was yonder,” he pointed upwards with his chin, and then whisked his kerchief in the direction of the top of the cliff. “I was on the down, and when I least expected it, and at the moment when I was not thinking of him, I saw him striding towards me, and when he came up with me, he was out of breath. I was standing then at the edge of the cleave. I was looking down into the coombe at my house, and I was in a dream. When I saw him, I did not stir. I would not go to meet him. I let him come to me. And when I saw him turn out of his path and cross the down to me, then I knew the hand out of the clouds pointed the way, and he followed not know-

ing to what it pointed. He came close to me, to the very edge of the rock, and I did not budge one inch. He had been walking fast, and spoke pantingly, in a strangely mixed manner, and he asked some question about Giles. I do not remember what he asked, but at the sound of his voice and of that name, then the fire that was in my heart broke out, and I was blind and mad. My blood roared in my ears and head, as the sea roars and beats against the coast in a gale. Then I shouted out all I knew ; I told him that Giles was his son, and that God would call him to account for his sins and his injustice and cruelties ; and he was as one amazed, that neither spoke nor moved till I raised my hand to strike him on the breast to rouse him to answer, and then, before ever I touched him, he stepped back and went over the cleave."

Then Marianne Saltren uttered a piercing shriek and tossed, and put her teeth to her husband's hand to bite at the fingers and force them to relax their grasp.

"There are people coming," she screamed,

“I will tell them all that you killed him. Let me go. I cannot bear your touch.”

“You accursed woman, you daughter of the old father of lies,” said Saltren between his teeth, and the bubbles formed in his mouth as he spoke through his teeth, “I will not let you go till you have told me who was the father of Giles.”

Suddenly, however, he let go her wrist, but she had her liberty for a moment only. He had drawn his black silk neckerchief round her throat, and twisted the ends about his fingers under her chin.

“Marianne, I killed him. Yet not I. I am but the executioner under Providence. What heaven judges that I carry out. And now I do not care if I kill you, after I killed him. I will kill you, I will strangle you, unless you confess who was the father of Giles.”

He was capable of doing what he threatened.

“It were best for you,” he said, “wicked woman, to suffer here a little pain, than burn eternally. Confess, or I will send you into

the world beyond." She was quiet for a moment, desisting from her useless struggle.

"You will release me if I say?"

"I will do so."

"He was a wonderfully handsome man then, a very fine fellow, the handsomest I ever saw."

"Who was he?"

"There were others besides me lost their hearts to him."

"Who was he?"

"I hear voices below the house. People are coming. You will be taken and hung because you killed him."

"Who was he?"

Saltren did not move a muscle. "Let them come, and they will find you dead also, beside him."

"You cannot judge of what he was by what he is now."

"His name?"

Again she looked to right and left, in spite of the grip under her chin, and made a start to escape, but instantly he tightened the kerchief and she became red as blood.

“Marianne,” said Saltren. “His name?”

He relaxed the pressure. She listened, no—she heard no voices, only mingled cawing of rooks and thumping of pulses in her ears.

“If you must know?”

“I must.”

“It was—Samuel Ceely.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

A PLACE OF REFUGE.

HE thrust her away from him with an exclamation of disgust. Then he stooped. A tuft of meadow-sweet grew among the stones where the dead man lay, and its white flowers were full of pollen, and the pollen, shaken from them, had fallen, and formed a dust over the upturned face.

Captain Saltren drew his black silk kerchief over the dead man's brow, and wiped away the powder, and as he did so was aware that the blue-bottle had returned ; he heard its drone, he saw its glazed metallic back, as it flickered about the body. Then he turned and went away, but had not gone far before he halted and came back, for he thought of the insect. That fly teased his mind, it was as though it buzzed about his brain, then perched and ran over it, irritating the nerves with its hasty movement of the

many feet, and the tap of its proboscis. He could not endure the thought of that fly—therefore he went back, and stood sweeping with his kerchief up and down over the face and then the hands, protecting the body against the blue-bottle.

He heard his wife running away, crying for help. He knew that before long she would have collected assistants to come to remove the dead body. They would find him there ; and was it safe for him to be seen in close proximity to the man he had killed ?

He knew that he ought to go. He had a horror of being there, alone with the corpse. Again he took a few steps to leave it, but, looking back over his shoulder, he saw the blue-bottle settle on the forehead, then run down along the nose to the lips of the dead man, and he went back to drive the creature away once more. Presently he heard voices, not those now of cawing rooks, but of men. But he could not stir from the place. He would be committing a sin, an unpardonable sin, a sin from which his soul could not

cleanse itself by floods of penitential tears. were he to allow the blue-bottle to deposit its eggs between those dead lips. His mind was unsettled. Now and then only did he think of himself as endangered, and feel an impulse to escape ; and yet the impulse was not strong enough to overcome his anxiety to protect the body. He did not consider the future, whether he had occasion to fear for himself, whether he would be put on his defence.

After a flood we find backwaters where promiscuous matter drifts in circles—straw, snags of wood, a dead sheep, a broken chair ; so was it in the mind of Stephen Saltren. His ideas were thrown into confusion ; thoughts and fancies, most varied and incongruous, jostled each other, without connection. The discovery that his wife had lied to him in the matter of the parentage of Giles and the guilt of Lord Lamerton, following on the excitement in which he had been through the encounter with his enemy, had sufficed to paralyse his judgment, and make his thoughts swerve about incoherently.

He was aware that he had committed a great mistake, he knew that his position was precarious ; but his confidence in his vision, and the mission with which he was entrusted remained unshaken, and this confidence justified to his conscience the crime that he had committed, if, indeed, he had committed one. But in the gyration of thoughts in his brain, only one fact stood out clearly—that a blue-bottle fly menaced the corpse, and that it was his duty to drive the insect away.

He was engaged on this obligation, when a hand touched him, and on looking round he saw Patience Kite.

“Captain Saltren,” said the woman, “why are you here? I saw you both on top of the cleave, and I do know that he did not fall by chance. I will not tell of you.”

He looked at her with blank eyes.

“Others may have seen you besides myself. You must not be found here.”

“I am glad,” said he dreamily, talking to himself, not to her, “I am glad that I had, myself, no occasion against him. I thought I had, but I had not,”

“Come with me,” said Mrs. Kite, “folks are near at hand. I hear them.”

He looked wistfully at the dead face.

“I cannot,” he said.

“What! Do you want to be taken by the police?”

“I cannot—I am held by the blue-bottle.” In a moment she stooped, snapped her hands together and caught the fly.

“Now,” said Saltren, “I will follow. It was not I, I am but the miserable instrument. The hand did it that brought him my way, that led him to the edge, and that then laid hold of my arm.”

Patience caught him by the shoulder and urged him away.

“You must not be seen near the body. Take my advice and be off to Captain Tubb about some lime, and so establish an alibi.”

Saltren shook his head.

“If not, then come along with me. I will show you a hiding-place no one thinks of. Folks could not tell how to take it, when they did find me lying buried under the fallen chimney; but when I saw it was cracking, I

made off through the dust, and none saw me escape. At the night-meeting some thought, when I stood on the table behind you, that I was a spirit. You can feel my grip on your arm, that I am in the flesh and hearty. I set fire to the tumbled thatch. It does good to scarce folks at times."

She drew Saltren into the wood. From a vantage point on the other side of the valley from that of the crag, themselves screened from sight, they could see a cluster of men about the dead body of Lord Lamerton, and Mrs. Saltren gesticulating behind them.

"I wonder," said Patience Kite, "whether that wife of yours be a fool or not? Your safety, I reckon, depends on her tongue. If she has sense, she will say she found the dead lord, as she was going to fetch water. If she's a fool, she'll let out about you. Did any one see you on the down?"

"I think Macduff went by some time before."

'Yes—I saw'n go along. That was some while afore."

Saltren said nothing. He was less con-

cerned about his own safety than Mrs. Kite supposed. He was intently watching the men raise the dead body.

“It is a pity,” pursued Mrs. Kite, “because if you hadn’t been seen by Mr. Macduff, I might have sworn you a famous alibi, and made out you was helping me to move my furniture. Thomasine also, she’d ha’ sworn anything in reason to do you a good turn. What a sad job it was that you didn’t chuck over Macduff as well. But there—I won’t blame you. We none of us, as the parson says, do all those things we ought to do, but leave undone what we ought. Thomasine and I’d swear against Mr. Macduff, but I doubt it would do no good, as Mrs. Macduff keeps a victoria and drives about in it, and we don’t, so the judge would have respect to the witness of Macduff and disregard ours. And yet they say there is justice and righteousness in the world!—when our testimony would not be taken and Macduff’s accepted, along of a victoria.”

She caught Saltren’s arm again, and led him further into the wood, along a path that

seemed to be no path at all for a man to walk, but rather a run for a rabbit. The bushes closed over a mere track in the moss.

“I reckon,” muttered Patience, “there’ll be a rare fuss made about the death of his lordship ; but how little account was made of that of young Tubb. That was a cruel loss to Thomasine and me. My daughter and he were sweethearts. Captain Tubb was going to take the boy on as a hand at the lime quarry ; he could not earn twenty shillings in a trade, so he would get fifteen as a labourer. Well—he could have married and kept house on that. Either he and my girl would have lived with me or with his father. Macduff and Lord Lamerton spoiled the chance for me and them. I owe them both a grudge, and I thank you for paying off my score on his lordship. Macduff may wait. In fall I will make a clay figure of him, and stick pins in it, and give him rheumatic pains and spasms of the heart. Whatever parsons and doctors may say, I can do things which are not to be found in books,

and there is more learning than is got by scholarship."

Mrs. Kite paused and looked round.

"You've not been about in the woods, creeping on all fours as I have, through the coppice. I know my way even in the dark. I can tell it by the feel of the stems of oak. Where there is moss, that is the side to the sou'-west wind and rain. The other side is smooth. So one can get along in the dark. What a moyle there will be over the death of his lordship all because he was a lord, and there was nothing made of the death of Arkie, because he was nobody. There is no justice and righteousness in the world, or Mr. Macduff would be wearing bracelets now and expecting a hempen necklace. Here we are at my cottage that he and his lordship tore down."

They emerged suddenly on the glade where stood the ruins. No one was visible. It remained as it had been left, save that the fallen rafters and walls were blackened by the smoke of the up-flaming thatch.

Patience did not tarry at the hovel. but led the way to the quarry edge.

“Do you see here,” she said, “you take hold of the ivy ropes, and creep along after me. It is not hard to do when you know the way. Miss Arminell first led me to the Owl’s Nest. One Sunday she came here, and holding the ivy, got along to the cave, and then let go the rope. I went after her ; and when my house was being pulled down about my head, then I remembered the cave, and went to it in the same way. Since then I have moved most of my things I want, and Thomasine has helped me. But she couldn’t come till her foot was better, along the edge where we shall go. What I cannot carry we let down from above by a rope, and I draw them in to me with a crooked stick. I shall have to pay no ground rent for that habitation, and I defy Mr. Macduff to pull the roof down on me. It is a tidy, comfortable place, in the eye of the sun. What I shall do in winter I cannot tell, but it serves me well enough as a summer house. If I want to bake, I have my old oven in the back-kitchen. Now lay hold of the ivy bands and come after me.

I will show you where you can lie hid when there is danger at Chillacot."

Saltren followed her, and in a few minutes found himself in the cave. She had hung an old potato sack half-way down the hollow, and behind this she had made her bed and stored her treasures.

"No one can visit me whom I do not choose to receive," said Mrs. Kite. "If I should see a face come round the corner, the way we came, I'd have but to give a thrust, as that you gave his lordship, and down he would go. Now I will return. You remain here. See, I crook the ivy chains over this prong of rock when I am here. Whatever you do, mind and do not let the chains fall away. If you do, you're a prisoner till I release you. That is how Miss Arminell was caught. I'll run and see what is going on, and bring you word."

The old woman unhooked sufficient strands of ivy to support herself, and went lightly and easily along the face of the rock.

Saltren remained standing. He had his hands linked behind his back, and his head

projecting. He had not recovered balance of mind ; his thoughts were like hares in poachers' gate-nets—entangled, leaping, turning over, and working themselves, in their efforts after freedom, into more inextricable entanglement. But one idea gradually formed itself distinctly in his mind—the idea that he had not been wronged by Lord Lamerton in the way in which he had supposed, and that, therefore, all personal feeling against him disappeared. But, in the confusion of his brain, he carried back this idea to a period before he discovered that he had been deceived by his wife into feeling this grudge, and he justified his action to himself ; he satisfied himself that there could have been no private resentment in his conduct to his lordship when he lifted his hand against him, because twenty minutes later he discovered that there were no grounds for entertaining it. This consideration sufficed to dissipate the first sense of guilt that had stolen over him. Now he knelt down in the cave, at its entrance, and thanked heaven that no taint of personal animosity had

entered into his motives and marred their purity. It was true that Lord Lamerton had thrown Saltren out of employ—he forgot that. It was true also that, as chairman of the board of directors of the railway, he had sought to force him to surrender his house and plot of land—he forgot that. It was true that at the time when he confronted Lord Lamerton, he believed that his domestic happiness had been destroyed by that nobleman—he forgot that also. He concluded that he had put forth his hand, acting under a divine impulse, and executing, not personal vengeance, but the sentence of heaven.

When a camel, heavy laden, is crossing the desert, the notion sometimes occurs to it that it is over-burdened, that its back is breaking, and it sullenly lies down on the sand. No blows will stir it—not even fire applied to its flanks ; but the driver with much fuss goes to the side of the beast, and pretends to unburden it of—one straw. And that one straw he holds under the eye of the camel, which, satisfied that it has been sensibly relieved,

gets up and shambles on. Our consciences are as easily satisfied when heavy burdened as the stupid camel. One straw—nay, the semblance, the shadow of a straw—taken from them contents us ; we rise, draw a long breath, shake our sides, and amble on our way well pleased.

Lord Lamerton had been doomed by heaven for his guilt in the matter of Archelaus Tubb. Was it not written that he who had taken the life of another should atone therefor with his own life ? Who was the cause of the lad's death ? Surely Lord Lamerton, who had ordered the destruction of the cottage. If the cottage had been left untouched, the chimney would not have fallen. Mr. Macduff was but the agent acting under the orders of his lordship, and the deepest stain of blood rested, not on the agent, but on his instigator and employer. Saltren had been on the jury when the inquest took place, and he had then seen clearly where the fault lay, and who was really guilty in the matter ; but others, with the fear of man in them, had not received his opinion and consented to it,

and so there had been a miscarriage of justice.

If a bell-pull be drawn, it moves a crank, and the crank tightens a wire, and that wire acts on a second lever, and this second crank moves a spring and sets a bell tingling. The hand that touches the bell-rope is responsible for the tingling of the bell, however far removed from it. So was Lord Lamerton responsible for the death of Archelaus, though he had not touched the chimney with his own hand.

Saltren was, moreover, deeply impressed with the reality of his vision, which had grown in his mind and taken extraordinary dimensions, and had assumed distinct outline as his fancy brooded over it. But it did not occur to his mind that fancy had deceived him, for to Saltren, as to all mystics, the internal imaginings are ever more real than those sensible presentiments which pass before their eyes.

Now he knelt in the cave, relieved of all sense of wrong-doing, and thanked heaven for having called him to vindicate its justice on the man whom human justice had acquitted.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NOTHING.

MR. JAMES WELSH occupied a small, respectable house in a row in Shepherd's Bush. The house was very new ; the smell of plaster clung about it. Before the row were young plane trees, surrounded with wire-netting to protect their tender bark from the pen-knives and pinching fingers of boys. Far in the dim future was a prospect of the road becoming an umbrageous avenue ; accordingly, with an eye to the future, those who had planned and planted the row entitled it The Avenue.

Up this avenue of wretched, coddled saplings walked Mr. Giles Inglett Saltren, in the best of spirits, to visit his uncle, the Monday morning after his arrival in town.

Now Giles Inglett Saltren was about to begin his career as a journalist, as a politician, as a man of letters. He had broken away from the position which had degraded and

enslaved him, which had cramped his genius, and suppressed his generous emotions.

He had not, indeed, heard from Welsh since he had written to him, but youth is sanguine. He could rely on his uncle finding him work, and he knew his own abilities were of no ordinary quality. He had essayed his powers on several political questions. He had written articles on the Eastern Embroglio, the Madagascar Policy of the French Republic, Port Hamilton, the dispute about the Fisheries, and Irish dissatisfaction. Very vigorous they were in style, and pulverising in argumentative force.

He had not sent them to his uncle, but he brought them with him now in a hand-bag. He came early to ensure finding Mr. Welsh at home and to allow time for reading his articles to him, and discussing the terms on which he was to be taken upon the staff of the paper with which his uncle was connected. He figured to himself the expression of the face of Welsh changing, as he listened, from incredulity to pleased surprise and rapt ecstasy, and the clasp of hands when the

lecture was over, the congratulation on success, and the liberal offer of remuneration that would ensue.

There was one telling passage on Port Hamilton which to Jingles' mind was so finely turned, so rich and mellow in its eloquence, that he repeated it twice to himself as he walked from Shepherd's Bush station to his destination.

"It is really well put," mused Jingles ; "and I think if it comes under the eye of the Ministry, that it must materially affect their policy, and, perhaps, decide the question of the retention or surrender of the station. More wonderful things have happened than that it should lead to my being offered a colonial appointment. Not that I would accept a post which was not influential. I am not going to be shelved as a foreign consul. I intend to be where I can put my mark on my times, and mould the destinies of the people. It would not be surprising were the Conservative Government to endeavour to silence me by the offer of some governorship which would take me from

home, and corner me where my influence would be powerless. But I intend to keep my eyes open. I am not one of the men who submit to suppression. Ah ! here is Uncle James' door."

He opened the little iron gate. A servant was on the steps, kneeling and scrubbing the threshold. She had managed to kneel on her apron, and tear it out of the gathers. Her slippers exposed a split over the toe, showing stocking, and the stocking was split over the heel, showing skin. She put her scrubbing-brush to her head to smooth the hair that had fallen forward, over the fringe.

"Is Mr. Welsh at home?"

"Yes'ir. Your card, please.?"

She looked at her fingers ; they were wet, so she put them beneath her apron, and extended her hand thus covered to receive the card, and nipped it through the integument of coarse linen, then turned and went in, leaving Saltren on the doorstep with the bucket. The soap she had prudently removed within, lest, while she was presenting

the card, he might make off with the square. She was up to the dodges of such chaps. So, also, she shut the door behind her, lest he should make off with an overcoat or umbrella. A servant cannot be too careful in the suburbs of London. Presently she returned, re-opened the door, and asked Saltren to kindly step into the master's study.

Mr. James Welsh was just engaged in unfolding his morning's paper preparatory to reading, or, rather, skimming it, when Jingles entered.

"Hallo, young shaver!" exclaimed the uncle, laying aside the newspaper somewhat reluctantly. "This is sharp work, dropping in on me before I have had time allowed me to answer your letter. I only came home last night. It is like crossing the frontier simultaneously with declaration of war. If you had waited for my answer you would have saved yourself trouble and the cost of your ticket."

"There were reasons which made it necessary for me to leave at once."

“ My dear boy, reasons are like eggs in a recipe for a pudding. The pudding is best with them ; but it is good without. You wanted to come, and you enrich your coming with reasons. That is the sense of it.”

“ But, Uncle James, I have long felt a decided vocation for a political and literary life, and I have long chafed at the restraints——”

“ Young shaver, in the ministerial world—I mean the world of ministers of religion—there are also calls ; but, curiously enough, only such are listened to when the call is from a salary of fifty to a hundred and fifty. I never yet heard of a pastor who listened to a call to leave one of a hundred for one of half that amount. But they jump like frogs when the call is t’other way. You should have learned wisdom from those apostles of light. You have, I fear, thrown up a lucrative situation for nothing. Like the dog in the fable dropped the piece of meat to bite at a shadow.”

“ I have no doubt,” said Jingles gravely, “that at first I shall not earn much ; but I

have some money laid by which will serve my necessities till I have made myself a name, and got an assured income."

"Made yourself a name! That is what no journalist ever does. Got an assured income! That comes late. You have not been through the mill."

"I have in my bag some articles I have touched off, leaders on important matters, of absorbing interest to the public."

"As what?"

"Port Hamilton."

"The public don't care a snap about that."

"The Eastern Question."

"About which you know nothing."

"The Irish Land Question."

"On which you are incompetent to form an opinion."

"Will you look at my articles?"

"I can't say. I can tell what they are like without your opening the bag. I know exactly the style of these schoolboy productions. If you particularly desire it, I will run my eye over them; but I tell you beforehand, they are good for nought. Mind you,

I don't expect that a writer of a leader knows any more of his subject than do you ; but he does know how to affect a knowledge he does not possess, and disguise his ignorance ; and he has a certain style that belongs to the business. It is with journalism as with acting. An amateur proclaims himself in every sentence. The ass's ears project from under the lion's skin. There are little tricks of the trade, a margin for gag, that must be employed and utilised, and only a professional is at his ease, and has the familiar tricks at his disposal, and gag at the end of his tongue. Can you manage shorthand ? ”

“ Shorthand ! No.”

“ Pity that. I might have got you some reporting jobs.”

“ But I do not want reporting jobs.”

“ Then you will get nothing.”

Jingles was rather offended than cast down.

“ I see what it is, Uncle Welsh,” he said in a tone of irritation, “ you journalists are a close corporation, and you will not admit an intruder. You are jealous of an invasion

within your circle, just as a parcel of commercials resent the entry of any but a commissioned bagman into their coffee-room."

"Not a bit; but we do object to a raw bumpkin who has not gone through his apprenticeship giving himself airs, and pretending to an equality with us who have drudged at the trade till we have mastered its technicalities."

"I presume that a good education and brains qualify a man to write."

"Not necessarily—certainly not to write leaders. I dare say we might hand over to you the reviewing of children's books. That would come within your range."

"It is an insult to offer such a thing."

"Indeed! You know little of literature or you would not say so. Formerly, when education was scarce, there were but a few writers, and they were well paid. Now education is universal, and every one who can handle a pen thinks he can write, even if he be imperfectly acquainted with spelling. Education now is as common, as general, as pocket-handkerchiefs. Both were luxuries

fifty years ago. Literature is glutted with aspirants ; brain is as common as æsthetic colours, as embroidered sunflowers, and Japanese lacquer. What is rare is muscle. Learn some mechanical art, and you will find biceps pays better than brain."

"You know very well I have not the health to adopt the trade of an artisan."

"Then become a preacher ; and here let me give you advice. If you want to become a popular preacher, and a power in the pulpit or on the platform, tear down. It is thankless work to build up ; that takes time, demands patience, and does not command immediate popularity and ready applause. You appeal to no passion when constructive. Passion is your ready assistant in destruction. Every man has so much of the savage in him that he likes the war-path and the taste of blood. You appeal to what you know is in all, when you give a war-whoop, and brandish a tomahawk. There is some picturesqueness and a sense of power, in whooping and whirling the axe ; there is only prose in smoking calumets of peace."

“I have no fancy for the pulpit; but I should like to become a political speaker.”

“We can try you at some village meeting; but the pay is not much. Take my advice and return to Orleigh.”

“That is impossible. I have burnt my ships. I can never recross the threshold of the house till I am recognised.”

“What—as a literary lion? As a stump orator?”

“No, uncle, as Lord Lamerton’s son.”

“As—as his—what?”

Mr. James Welsh burst into a fit of laughter, and when he was exhausted, exploded, in spite of exhaustion, into a second peal.

Jingles maintained his gravity. His brow contracted. He folded his arms across his breast, and stood sternly waiting till this unseemly ebullition of merriment had subsided, in the attitude in which Napoleon appears in Horace Vernet’s celebrated picture, on Saint Helena, looking at the setting sun.

“You must excuse me,” said he at last, “if I say that this is not the way in which I expected to be received. First you scoff at

my honourable ambition to be a man of letters, and then you explode into indecent laughter when I mention the fact of my parentage with which you are perfectly familiar, though it is not known to the world at large."

"By Jove, Giles, I did not suppose you were such a fool."

"I do not understand you."

"I may say, Giles, that I do not understand *you*. Do you mean seriously to assure me that you give credence to that cock-and-bull tale?"

"Uncle Welsh, I believe my mother's word."

"Far be it from me to say anything to a son disrespectful of his mother; and in this case I merely point out to you the richness and exuberance of your mother's fancy. Penelope embroidered by day, and by night unpicked her day-work. My dear boy, it is, perhaps, a matter of regret that my sister contents herself with embroidery, and does not complement her work by unpicking the fantastic and highly-coloured figures that

needle, her tongue, has elaborated. She is like a magic-lantern projecting pictures upon smoke, sheets, or blank walls, making those surfaces alive with forms and faces. You really would suppose that the man in bed was actually swallowing the rats that ran into his mouth, and that Blue Beard in very truth rolled his eyes and cut off his wife's head, and that the cabbage was converted into Snip the Tailor. But, my dear nephew, they are phantasms. Go up to them, touch, observe, there is only smoke or whited wall. I have the highest respect for my sister's genius. I bow before her imagination, and adore it; but remember what Paley said of the imagination—that it is the fertile mother of error. My good sister's delusive faculty seems to have become mamma to an extravagant blunder, which you are lovingly nursing."

"Then you place no reliance on my mother's account?"

"Wait a moment." Mr. Welsh went to the bookcase. "Here is a peerage. Turn up 'Lamerton, Baron,' and see where his lordship was at that time that you were begun

to be thought about. He was not in England—had not been there for two or three years. I knew that as well as the author of the peerage, perhaps better; for I was at Orleigh at that time, a fact my sister Marianne forgot when she exhibited to me her magic-lantern slides. I was not then what I am now. I was then thankful for a bit of literary work, and did not turn up my nose at reviewing children's books. I was as glad then to get a chance of putting pen to paper as I now am of getting a holiday from pen and paper."

"And," said Jingles, somewhat staggered by the evidence of the peerage, "you mean to tell me that my mother said—what—what—what was false?"

"Young shaver," said Mr. Welsh, "I read 'Herodotus' in Bohn's translation. I don't even know the letters of the Greek alphabet. I read for professional purposes. I observe that when the father of history comes to a delicate and disputed question, he passes it over with the remark, 'I prefer not to express my own opinion thereon.' When you ask me whether what your mother said was true or a

lie, I answer with Herodotus, 'I prefer not to express my own opinion thereon.'"

Giles Inglett looked down on the carpet. His lips quivered.

"Young shaver," pursued Mr. Welsh, cheerily, rubbing his hands together, and taking up his newspaper, as a hint to his nephew to be gone, "you had best return to your inn, and begin to pull out the threads of that elaborate and gorgeous piece of Gobelin your mother has furnished you with. Believe me, under the coloured worsted and floss silk, you will come on very vulgar canvas. It is a sad pity that you should have learned that you are not the son of Stephen Saltren. You might well have been left to share the common belief. Perhaps it was inevitable that you should discover the flaw in your nativity. Some women cannot hold their tongues. I am not sure that the Babylonians acted unwisely when on the occasion of their revolt against Darius, they strangled every woman in the city except their cooks, for, they argued, men can get along without the sex in every other capacity."

The young man was profoundly disturbed. He looked up, and said in a voice that expressed his emotion—

“Uncle, do not jest with me in this matter. To me it is one of deadly earnest. I entreat you speak the truth, for—good heavens! If I am not what I supposed myself to be, I have made a terrible mistake.”

“You are no more a son of Lord Lamerton than I am. Marianne—I mean, your mother—thinks I am ignorant of the real facts, but I never was, though I said nothing at the time or after.”

“Then you know who my father was.”

“Yes, I do—but I am not disposed to tell you.”

“I insist on knowing.”

“You ought never to have been told that you were not what you and the world supposed. Now don’t attempt to lift the embroidered veil your good mother has cast over the mystery. The veil is handsomer than what it conceals.”

“But—I have acted on the supposition that I was the son of Lord Lamerton.”

“I know you have, and more fool you. You have left your situation as tutor in his house and a respectable income.”

“I have done more. I have persuaded Miss Inglett to run away with me.”

“You have—what?”

Mr. Welsh dropped his hands and the paper; he stood for a moment in blank amazement. Then the blood rushed into his brow, and his hands clenched.

“You have—you dare not repeat those words.”

“It is true. I supposed she was my sister.”

“You dirty little blackguard!” cried Welsh, losing all control over himself and his tongue; he sprang towards his nephew, brandishing the newspaper. “I will horse-whip you with the only weapon I have, the *Daily News*! You coxcomb! You infamous snob! I’m ashamed to acknowledge you as my sister’s child.”

“I know that I have made a terrible mistake.”

“Mistake is not the word for it. A more

detestable, outrageous, caddish act, I could not conceive. Good gracious ! I would like to kick you round my table, kick you down the hall, kick you out at my door, down the steps, send you flying along the avenue from tree to tree, and a kick at each. Do you not see, you scoundrel, what you have done ?—cast an indelible slur upon the girl's character. Mistake—mistake, indeed ! Of all snobbery ! Mistake ! Get out of my house this instant. You pollute the atmosphere, you. You a son of my lord ! You, who have not a drop of honourable blood in your veins, not a spark of proper feeling in your heart, not the smallest grain of gentlemanly, let alone noble sentiment in your whole nature—you contemptible bastard of Sam Ceely.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LESS THAN NOBODY.

GILES INGLETT SALTREN was so completely thrown off his balance by Welsh's repudiations of the story of his parentage, that he did not resent, he hardly heard the burst of indignation that escaped his uncle ; or, if he heard it, his mind was too preoccupied to follow his words, and measure their force, and take umbrage at their grossness. He was overpowered with dismay. What had he done ? He could not even realise the extent of the evil he had wrought, nor measure the depth of his own baseness.

But Mr. Welsh was not a man to leave him without having spread out the mass of his misdeeds before him, and held his head down over it, and indicated its most salient features.

“ You abominable little snob ! ” he exclaimed. “ Have you forgotten what has

been done for you? If his lordship had not taken you from the hard form on which you polished the seat of your corduroys, and set you in an easy chair, you'd have nice callosities now. Probably you would not have been alive at all had he not sent you to the South of France." Mr. Welsh became sarcastic. "No doubt you owe his lordship a grudge because he didn't let you go at once to kingdom come instead of detaining you here in this Vale of Tears. Mind you, Giles—there is no escape from this fact, that you owe your life to him. To him also you owe your education. To him you owe it that, supposing you had lived, you are not now a horny-handed ploughboy, that you know how to use a pocket-handkerchief, and don't put your knife in your mouth."

Mr. Welsh thrust his hands into his pockets, and stood with legs apart looking scornfully at his nephew.

"Pray, Mr. Giles Inglett, how would you like to go back to potato pasty and cold boiled junk of bacon? To an early dinner, and swipes instead of claret? To getting

your clothes at a slop-shop, instead of being fitted by a tailor? To being without books and magazines and reviews? Are you aware that you have earned not one of the luxuries or even comforts of civilised life? That they have come to you undeserved as does free Grace? Upon my word, you make my blood splutter! Shall I tell you what would have been the end of you had not Lord Lamerton come to the rescue? After you were ill you would have been cared for, or not cared for, after the fashion of common folk's children, and your mother's haphazard way of doing everything, allowed to get your feet wet, and stand in draughts, neglected one day, coddled the next, till your weak lungs gave way, and rapid consumption set in. Shall I tell you what would have been the course of Act II? Then you would have been mewed up in that dismal back bedroom at Chillacot, with the ultramarine wash on the walls, and the snipped, emerald-green, silver-paper fly-trap suspended in the middle of the room, and the blistered mirror, and the window looking out at a

dripping rock, ugh ! There you would have lain and coughed ; and when an attempt was made to light the fire, the smoke would have refused to try the road up the chimney, and preferred that to your lungs ; and when the window was opened to let the smoke out it would have let in the smell of the pigstye. When you wanted a book to enliven you, you would have been given Baxter's ' Saints' Rest ' or a Methodist Missionary Magazine, and death itself would have been welcome as an escape from such literature. You would have needed wine, and not had it ; cod-liver oil, and not had it ; grapes, and not had them ; calves' foot jelly, and had to do without. You would have been given thin gruel, and fried india-rubber, that playfully considered itself rump steak, much as you consider yourself a nobleman, and leaden dough, greasy bacon, and lukewarm bad tea. Your bed would have been lumpy, and made occasionally, and your sheets changed now and then, and your pillow-case assuming the adhesiveness to your cheek of postage stamps ; and there would have been a

draught like a mill-race pouring in through that gap—I know it—under the door. When you wanted to sleep by day, your mother would be scouring pans in the back kitchen underneath, and when so inclined at night, your father, on the other side of the partition, would be snoring like John Willett. As you grew weaker, and more unable to endure worry, in would have come the captain, to exhort and expound, and stir and whip up your weary soul into a caper of screaming terror. You would have longed for death as an escape from the smells and the smoke, and the crude blue, and the draught, and the knots in your mattress, and the Missionary Magazines, and the pigs in the yard, and the benzoline lamp.”

Mr. Welsh stooped and picked up his newspaper, which lay crumpled on the floor. He smoothed it, and folded it on the table. Then he looked hard at his nephew. Giles remained motionless, with eyes on the carpet; his brow was troubled and his lips trembling. He was very pale.

“That is how you would have ended as a

boy of seventeen," pursued Mr. Welsh, remorselessly, mercilessly. "Your life you owe to Lord Lamerton, your mind has been expanded and enriched by him. Had he not sent you to college what would have been the range of your ideas? What would you have known of Shakespeare, Thackeray, Pope, Goethe and Dante? What appreciation of art? You would have been as incapable of judging between a good painting and a daub, of discriminating between Tannhauser and Sankey and Moody, as any chawbacon. What I have learned, I have learned with labour; I had no masters, no hand to help me over the stile. I wish I had had your advantages, but no Lord Lamerton took me up. I had not that luck. I have had to fight my own way. I daresay you think it inconsistent in me to take the part of his lordship against my own nephew, but that is because your conscience is disordered. I fight him tooth and nail, because he is an aristocrat, and I a democrat. It is my business to attack the Tories and the landed interest and the House of Lords. I am a

politician, and in politics all is fair ; but we are now in another region altogether, in that of common honesty, and domestic relations ; I look on my lord, not as a nobleman, but as a father, and a kind-hearted man who has done much for you ; and I am able to take the gauge of your conduct accordingly. You have behaved infamously towards your benefactor, you have hurt him where he is most sensitive—hitting, you contemptible little coward, below the belt. You have stained the pure name of his only daughter, tarnished the honour of an irreproachable house. Who will believe that the girl ran away with you, because she supposed that you were her brother ? Everyone knows that you are nothing of the kind. Should it leak out that you are not Captain Saltren's son, how will it mend matters if it be shown that you are the bastard brat of old blear-eyed, one-handed, limping Samuel Ceely ?”

Giles winced, he raised both his hands, half beseechingly, half as if to protect himself from the words which struck him as blows. It was a convulsive, not a purposed move-

ment. Also he looked up for a moment, and attempted to speak, but said nothing, the words died away in his throat. Then his head fell again.

“You say you have saved some money,” Welsh went on; “whose money? That which Lord Lamerton gave you. How many hundreds of pounds do you suppose you have cost him? In sending you to Bordighera, in doctors’ bills, in school and college accounts? You swaggered at Oxford as a gentleman, and Lord Lamerton paid for it. He furnished your rooms in college, paid your battels. You invited your friends to breakfasts and wines, and he paid for them. Who but he put the clothes on your back, hung the pictures on your walls, fitted neat boots on your feet, and supplied you with that silk pocket-handkerchief you are now using to wipe the shame drops off your brow with? And—in return for all this, you stab him to the heart and blast the fair name of his child! Good heavens! I feel as uncomfortable in your presence as would Mr. Gladstone in a lodge of Primrose Dames on

St. Benjamin's day. But there!—enough about your despicable self. It is high time something were done about Miss Inglett. I'll go with you. What a nuisance it is that Tryphœna is just now without a cook. I'll bring the girl here, nevertheless, if she has nowhere else to go to ; or I will run down with her myself to Orleigh, or I'll take her to any relation she may have in town. You come with me, you mean little cad, as far as your inn, or lodgings, or where the deuce you are, and leave me there. Don't show your pasty face again. We have seen already too much of you."

He rang the bell, and the maid-of-all-work appeared.

" Susan, turn, or take off your apron, and run and fetch me a hansom."

" Please, sir, an' if I don't come on an 'ansom? "

" Then a cab. Come, sharp! "

He said no more. He was agitated, because very angry. He went out for his hat and gloves, and an umbrella, opened the latter and refolded it ; then he discovered

that he was in a shabby morning coat, so he changed it upstairs, and put on his boots in the hall, and then returned for his newspaper.

By this time Susan had arrived, seated in a four-wheeler. She had not encountered a hansom.

“Go on,” said Welsh to his nephew, “I’ll follow.” He took his newspaper from the table, and brought it with him to the cab.

The direction was given to the driver, and the vehicle started. Welsh would not speak another word to Giles. He threw himself back with a grunt in the cab, and began to read his paper.

Jingles looked dreamily forth from the window on his side. The cab was being driven along Gold Hawk Road; there was not much traffic in it that morning; a coal-cart, a Shepherd’s Bush omnibus were passed. The cabman drew up, and swore at an old lady who in crossing the road had dropped a parcel of tracts, which scattered in all directions, and who returned almost under the feet of the horse to recover some of the papers.

Mr. James Welsh uttered an exclamation. Saltren did not notice it, he was in a stunned condition, unable to take observation of anything, unable to do more than reiterate in his mind, "I have made a mistake—a fatal mistake!" He was unable even to consider in what way it could be rectified, if capable of rectification. He was not in a condition to weigh his uncle's proposals what to do with Arminell. He did not even feel his uncle's rude remarks, they passed over him without producing an impression, so deadened were his faculties by the consternation in which he was. His brain was like a sewing-machine in full operation, with a needle in it, stab—stab—stabbing, and always carrying the same thread, "I have made a mistake—a fatal mistake!" and making therewith a lock stitch incapable of unravelment, that went round and round both heart and brain, and bound them together.

"Good God!" exclaimed Welsh, and let drop his paper on his lap. Then he turned, "Giles!" he shouted in his nephew's ear. "Confound the fellow, are you asleep? I

did think I had heard the worst, but there is worse behind! Lord—this is awful! Giles—you fool—look at the paper.”

The young man took the sheet mechanically. The fly jolted, and he could not read. He laid the paper down. “My eyes are dazzled,” he said, “I cannot make out the print. Besides, I am indifferent to news.”

“You must not be indifferent. The news concerns you particularly.”

“I don’t care about politics,” said Giles irritably, “I am worried, crushed. I have made a mistake—an awful, a fatal mistake.”

“This is not about politics at all,” shouted his uncle. “Lord! How shall I break the tidings to Miss Inglett? I wish I had brought my wife. Women do these things better than men. But, as we have no cook, Tryphœna is engaged this morning in the kitchen, up to her ears, above her ears, judging from the condition of the top of her head, in work—I must do it. I hope that Miss Inglett has not seen a newspaper this morning.”

“Well—then—what is it?” asked young Saltren impatiently.

“What is it? Just this,” answered Welsh grimly and with vehemence, “Lord Lamerton is dead.”

“Dead!” Giles Saltren was frozen with horror.

“Yes—dead. Found dead near Chillacot, fallen down the cliff whilst on his way to see your father. Of course there are suspicions of foul play. Nothing as yet certain.”

“Found dead!” The young man gasped for breath. The muscles of his chest contracted and a pain as though a bayonet had stabbed him shot through his heart. He was suffocating, he gasped for breath. The windows of the cab began to spin round him, the back of the cab with the cushions swung round to the front, and the front lights went behind, and the side windows rose and hung over his head, then revolved and were beneath his feet. Mr. Welsh let down the glass near the young man, as he saw the condition into which he was falling, and that he was incapable of doing this for himself.

“Yes,” said his uncle, “dead—that is what has come on us now, and there is mischief

behind. That mad, fanatical fool, the captain—I should not wonder if he were involved in it, with his visions, and trümpets, and vials, and book of the Gilded Clique. He ought to have been locked up long ago. He took everything in solemn earnest; he believed in Marianne's rodomontade; he swallowed her lies whole. As far as I can guess this is what happened. Lord Lamerton discovered that Miss Inglett was gone, gone with you, and without a word to any one went to Chillacot over the down to make inquiries of the captain about the fugitives. How he came to fall over the cliff on his way, God knows! But of this I am very certain, that it was you, Giles, who sent him on the road that led to death. He would not have gone to Chillacot had he not had need to go there to inquire after you. So now, Giles, what do you think of yourself—eh?"

Young Saltren covered his face with his hands, and sank fainting into the bottom of the cab.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ANOTHER BREAK-DOWN.

ARMINELL had awoke to the fact that she had made a mistake before that conviction had been brought home to the mind of Jingles ; but she entertained not the shadow of a suspicion how radical that mistake was.

She became conscious that she had put herself in a false position almost as soon as she had taken the false step. At the first large station the guard had been obtrusively obliging, and a little familiar. He had allowed her to see that he regarded her and Giles as a young couple starting on their honeymoon tour ; that he took a friendly interest in them, and he assured them he would allow no one to invade their compartment. He looked in on them half-way to know how they were getting on ; whether she would desire refreshments to be brought her to the carriage ; whether she would like to have the blinds drawn down.

Arrived in town, they went to a quiet private hotel in Bloomsbury, mostly frequented by literary persons consulting the library of the British Museum. Jingles had not been there before. He knew of the hotel only by repute.

The landlady, an eminently respectable person, hesitated at first about receiving the young people. She did not understand the relation in which they stood to each other, and she looked inquisitively at Arminell's left hand. There was not a trace of family likeness that she could discover in their faces, when young Saltren explained that they were brother and sister. A further explanation was necessary when he gave his name as Saltren, and hers as Inglett. Then he regretted that he had not gone to a large hotel, where no questions would have been asked. He had considered his pocket, and Arminell's wishes. He could not afford a heavy expense, and she shrank from publicity.

Next morning Arminell woke with a sense of depression she could not shake off. As she dressed, the tears of mortification rose

into her eyes. She was vexed with herself and vexed with Jingles. She knew that what she had done must wound her father, and compromise herself, at all events, for a while. She had taken the step in a fit of pique at her father's desire to get rid of her, and of romantic enthusiasm, to force him to acknowledge Jingles. She had felt convinced that in no other way could he be induced to do this. She entertained no particular admiration for young Saltren, no great affection for him, only a girlish eagerness to see a misunderstood and ill-used man put in his proper place and acknowledged by the world. When she met Jingles at breakfast in the coffee-room, there was mutual restraint between them of which both were conscious ; and in Arminell's heart a little welling up of wrath against him. She knew that the feeling was ungenerous. He was less to blame than herself—that is, she had proposed the elopement ; but then he was older than herself, and as a man ought to have pointed out the impropriety of the proposal. Now it was too late. The die was cast which must mould

the rest of her life, and of what nature that die was she could not yet tell.

Sunday passed quietly. Arminell remained for the most part in her own room, and young Saltren also kept secluded, going through, recopying, and improving his article on Port Hamilton, which he regarded as his masterpiece.

On Monday, at breakfast, Saltren told her that he would go at once, early in the day, to consult his uncle, and that then they would go together in search of suitable lodgings. The looking out for lodgings could be done in the afternoon, as their nature would be determined by the amount of income on which Saltren could reckon.

“I suppose,” he said, “that my uncle can help me into getting the composition of a leader every alternate day as a beginning, and if I get five guineas for a leader, that will make fifteen in the week. Then, I suppose, I can do reviewing, and write for magazines, and make about thirty pounds a week, that will be, say fifteen hundred a year, as a beginning. I have reckoned the year

as one of fifty instead of fifty-two weeks, because I shall have to allow myself a short holiday. On fifteen hundred a year we ought to have a nice villa residence, with garden and conservatories. What do you say to a Queen Anne house at Turnham Green? I, myself, rather incline to Chislehurst."

When he was gone, Arminell, left to herself, had returned to her bedroom, to find it not ready for her. So she went downstairs again, and sat by the window in the coffee-room, looking into the street through the wire-gauze blind, not thinking of and interested in what passed in the street, but turning in mind to Orleigh, to her pretty chamber there; to the breakfast-room, with the windows to the east, and the sun flooding it; to the table with its silver, and flowers, and porcelain. How small everything in this inn was, and how lacking in freshness and grace!

Her father's cheery face had been a feature at the meal, as was also her step-mother, fresh, gentle, pale, and dove-like in movement and tone. She remembered these things now that she had cast them from her,

and found that they had been pleasant, and were not to be recalled without a beating of the pulse, and a rising in the throat.

Two gentlemen were at breakfast at a table near her, and were eating eggs—London eggs—and the savour of eggs, especially London eggs, in a low room is not agreeable.

They were talking about the tribes of Northern Asia—Samojeds, Ostiacks, Tungus, Vogulese, about brachycephalic and dolichocephalic heads, and agglutinative tongues, and linguistic roots; and then one of the gentlemen dropped some of his egg on his beard, and continued to eat and talk of agglutinative tongues, and ethnological peculiarities, and Turanian characteristics, without observing it; and the drop of yolk coagulated on his beard, and moved with his jaw, and became agitated and excited over the linguistic affinities of the Tchuchtchees with the Koriacks on one side and the Yuckaheres on the other.

Arminell was teased both by the drop of yolk from which she could not withdraw her

eye, and by the vehemence of the disputants, and by the—to her—uninteresting nature of the topic that was discussed. She forced herself to look into the street, and observe the passers-by ; but in another minute fell to ruminating on the condition of the gentleman's beard, to wondering whether he had yet wiped the egg-drop away, or why his friend did not point it out to him ; and then her eye mechanically travelled back to the beard, and the gamboge spot on it. Presently a stout, shabbily-dressed lady entered with her two plain daughters, all three with that grey complexion that makes one think the heads must be cut out of Jerusalem artichoke. The mother had puffy cheeks, and small beady eyes. She talked loudly to her daughters, loudly enough to be heard by all in the room, about her distinguished acquaintances, her butler, and footmen, and lady's-maid, and coachman, and carriages, and gradually subdued the gentlemen who had been arguing over the ethnology of Northern Asia, and set them wondering how it was that this stout party and her daughters had

come to so small an inn, and were not occupying a suite in the Hotel Metropole.

Arminell had endured the talk of the learned men, but the vulgar clack of this underbred woman was insupportable. She rose and ascended the stairs to her bedroom, which was now, fortunately, ready for her.

This room did not command the street. It looked out at the mews, and beyond the mews at a row of brick houses, seen above the wall enclosing the back premises. In the mews yard were some carriages being washed, and grooms with their braces discharged from their right shoulders, brushing and combing their horses. Over the stables were the windows of the dwellings of the cabdrivers and their wives, and of the ostlers ; and there were sickly attempts at flower gardening in some of them. Out of others hung articles of clothing to be aired or dried. A multitude of dingy sparrows hopped about in the yard, and also a considerable and apparently inexhaustible number of equally dingy children.

Beyond the wall of the backyard of a house in the row was a gaunt Lombardy poplar,

trunk and branches sable as the stalks of maidenhair fern. What a pretty view had been that which Arminell had commanded from her bed-room window at Orleigh! The sweeps of green turf in the park, the stately trees, the cedars, and the copper beech, and the silver birch! How the birds had sung in the morning about her window! How sweet had been the incense of the wisteria trusses of lilac flowers entering at the open casement!

What would her father say at her departure? Into what a predicament had she put him? She had forced him into one from which he could not escape without publishing his own dishonour, without allowing his wife, and the parish, and the county, and society generally to know that once on a time he had behaved in a manner unworthy of a gentleman to a poor servant girl. He to whom every one in the place, in the county, looked up as a spotless and worthy John Bull, was to be proclaimed an impostor, and made the talk of idle and malicious tongues.

“If a man has done wrong,” she said to

justify herself, "he must bear the consequences. It is cowardly to try and hide the act, evade what it entails, and base to appear before the world under false pretences. Let him acknowledge the wrong he has done, and men will then respect him because he is open, and does not shrink from those consequences a wrong act brings on the wrong-doer."

But this did not satisfy her. It might be true, it was true, that this was the only right and honourable course for one to take who had erred, but—was she, his daughter, the proper person to force her father into the course and out of the road he had elected to pursue? Was it for her hand to rip up old wounds, and drag into the light the dark secrets he strove to bury out of sight? Was it for her to reveal a stain which disfigured the whole house? Was it for her to shock her step-mother, and disturb her trust? To mar the domestic unity and mutual esteem which had been so perfect?

Lady Lamerton had her weaknesses, but she had also her strength, and her strength

was the rectitude of her heart, which made her do her duty with all her power. In pursuance of this sense of duty, Lady Lamerton had been unfailingly kind to Arminell. The girl, looking back, saw this now, and was stung with self-reproach, because in return for this treatment she cast the apple of discord between her father and mother, and broke what to her ladyship was the most precious jewel she possessed—her reverence for my lord.

And how—when it pleased Arminell to return home after all the disturbance she had caused, the pain and humiliation she had occasioned—how would she be received again by those she had wronged and hurt? She had no doubt upon this point. She knew that she would be received with open arms, and without a word of reproach from one or the other.

Then Arminell began to sob, and she saw no more the ostler curricombing his horse, nor the woman shaking a table-cloth out of a window, nor the sparrows quarrelling for the crumbs, nor the back of a maid seated outside

a house on a window ledge cleaning the glass, or she saw these things through a watery film.

She was roused by a tap at her door. She hastily dried her eyes, and stood up, with her back to the light, that her discomposure might be unobserved, and called to the person without to enter.

A waiter opened the door and announced that a gentleman had called, and was below in a private sitting-room. He extended a tray, and Miss Inglett took from it a card, and read, "Mr. James Welsh."

"I will come down directly," she said.

The waiter bowed and closed the door.

Arminell tarried for a moment only, to recover herself, and then descended. She expected to see Jingles with his uncle, but he was not in the room.

"At your service, Miss Inglett. I am the uncle of Hansel who has run away with Grethel. You find that you have not come to the cottage of almond rock, with windows of barley sugar. You are not, I suppose, interested in politics?"

“No, or only slightly. Social subjects—”

“Neither in Monday’s paper. Never in my life saw one with less of interest in it, no news, nothing but a Temperance Demonstration at Exeter Hall, presided over by the Reverend Jowles. It is not worth your while looking into a paper to-day.”

“Is Mr. Saltren returned?” asked Arminell.

“Damped off,” replied Welsh. “That is a process whereby an amateur loses a good many cuttings and seedlings. Hansel came to me with any amount of young hopes and ambitions and cockscombs—especially, and I have damped them all off. Expected to make a fortune in literature, wanted to tread the walks of political journalism—as well try to tread the tight rope without previous education. Miss Inglett, you will see no more of him. So what is Grethel to do without her Hansel?”

He paused for a minute but received no answer, not, perhaps, that he expected one, but he allowed time for what he had said to soak into her mind before he went on.

“There is a story,” continued Welsh, who purposely spun out what he had to say, knowing it was an unpleasant dose, and therefore to be mixed with jam. “There is a story by a classic author, whom I have read only in English, concerning a young man named Lucius who once saw a woman smear herself with an unguent, whereupon she flew out at the window, transformed into a bird. Lucius got hold of the unguent and applied it to himself and found himself to have become—not a bird by any means—simply an ass. Our good friend has been going through the same experience. You, Miss Inglett, have spread your wings, and Giles comes trotting after with a bray. You need not be afraid—he will not show himself again. He has looked on himself in a mirror, and is hiding his ears.”

“Do you mean, Mr. Welsh, that your nephew has deserted me?”

“The ass is just now so ashamed of himself, that he is in hiding. But no more about him. What about yourself? I place myself unreservedly at your disposal. I will recon-

duct you to Orleigh, by the next train, and telegraph for the carriage to meet us at the station."

"I cannot go back—just now."

"Have you a relation, a lady, in town who could receive you?"

"Lady Hermione Woodhead—my aunt."

"Then I will take you to her at once."

"I cannot go to her."

"Then Mrs. Welsh will be happy to accommodate you. She is without a cook, but that don't matter. She can make good pastry. Come along with me to Shepherd's Bush. There will be rissoles for dinner to-day as we had joint yesterday; and we will buy a pair of soles on our way."

"I cannot understand," said Arminell. "I came here with your nephew. I suppose you are aware that he is my half-brother."

"Half-fiddlesticks," exclaimed Mr. Welsh. "My dear young lady, you have been carried off your feet by romantic fancies, which at a certain ingenious age inflate the head as carburetted hydrogen does a goldbeaterskin bag. Giles has been in the same condition, but I

have pricked the bag and let out the nonsense. Now his head is in a condition of collapse. That which you were told about his parentage is all nonsense."

"Do you mean—" Arminell did not finish the sentence, she was interrupted by Welsh.

"Yes, I do," he said. "I know all the circumstances. I know more about them than my sister Marianne supposes. Marianne is an utter liar, has a physical infirmity, I suppose, which prevents her tongue from being straight. It describes as many curls as a corkscrew on the St. Gothard line. She has about as keen a sense of truth as a Russian diplomatist, and as much bounce as General Boulanger. Now then—as you see from which direction the wind blows, and where lie the reefs, perhaps you will allow a pilot to come unsignalled on board, and turn your head off the breakers."

"I have made a mistake—a fatal mistake," was all that Arminell could say, dropping her hands at her sides.

"Those are precisely my nephew's words—literally the same ; which is not to be wondered at, because you have both fallen together into

the same error. Come, I must help you out of your difficulties. What will you do? Go to your aunt? Return home? Or come to Shepherd's Bush to rissoles and a pair of soles, fried or boiled as you prefer?"

"But where is Mr. Saltren? I ought to see him."

"He will not show his face again. He is at the present moment like blancmange from which the isinglass has been omitted, in a condition of mental and moral imbecility."

A tap at the door, and without waiting for an answer Giles Inglett Saltren entered, erect with firm step, and a resolute face.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A RALLY.

GILES INGLETT SALTREN had left the cab at Cumberland Gate, when the momentary faintness had passed. He wished to be alone, in the fresh air, and with his own thoughts. His uncle had detained the cab till he saw that his nephew was better. He left him on a bench in the park and bade him remain there till his return from the interview with Arminell.

The young man felt the relief of being alone. The vibration of the carriage, his uncle's voice, his own self-reproach, had, combined with the shock of the news of his lordship's death, brought about the slight fit of unconsciousness. He was in that overwrought condition of nervous tension in which another touch would be insupportable ; and Welsh's finger was not light, he twanged the fibres in his nephew's heart, not as if he were playing a harp with finger-balls, but as if he

were performing on a zither with his nails. The air was cool ; the bench on which Jingles was seated had not another occupant. The great open space in Hyde Park devoted to political meetings was sparsely peopled at that time in the morning ; he was not likely to be disturbed, and the rumble of vehicles along Uxbridge Road and Oxford Street produced a soothing effect rather than the contrary.

A Frenchman was walking along the path before his bench with a walking-stick ; he had found a bit of slate in the way, and with his cane he flipped it along a few feet, then stopped, and flipped it on to the grass ; went upon the turf and flipped it back into the path. Then he sent it forward, past Jingles on his bench, and so on as far as Cumberland Gate, where the young man lost sight of Monsieur, and was unable to see whether he continued to drive the scrap of slate before him up Oxford Street in the direction of his haunts in Leicester Square, or whether he left it under the arch.

Till the Frenchman had disappeared, Giles

Saltren did not begin to consider his own trouble. He could not do so till the bit of slate was gone beyond his range, with Monsieur after it. Watching the man was a sensible relief to him. When one has run, a pause allows the recovery of breath, and abates the pulsations, so did this diversion of attention serve to relieve Jingles, to lull the agony of remorse, and enable his mind to regain something of evenness and tone.

When a man has been struck on the head by a hammer, he falls. Jingles had received three stunning blows, and recovery could not be immediate. His sanguine hopes of living by his pen had been upset, and that was a blow to his self-esteem. Then his belief in his noble parentage had been knocked over. And lastly he had heard of Lord Lamerton's death—and whether that were accidental or not, he could hardly doubt that he had brought it about, for his lordship would not have left his guests to go to Chillacot, had he not been impelled to do so by learning of the elopement.

There are moments in the lives of most of us when we come on new scenes that

are epoch-making in our life's history. I shall never forget as such my first view of Mont Blanc, from the Col de Balme, and of a portion of the moon's surface through the Cambridge Observatory telescope, or the first sight of death. Some of these first sights are invested with pleasure unutterable, others with infinite pain ; and of such latter are often those peeps within ourselves which we sometimes obtain.

What atmospheric effects, what changing lights, all beautiful, invest the outer landscape with magic, even where the scenery is tame. How rarely is it unpleasing to the eye. And it is the same when we turn our eyes inwards, and contemplate the landscape of our own selves, what glories of light flood all, what richness of foliage clothes all, how picturesque are the inequalities ! How vast the surface to the horizon ! And yet, it sometimes happens, not often, and not even to all, that a shadow falls over the scene and blots out all its comeliness, and then ensues a flare, a lightning flash, and we see all—no longer beautiful, but infinitely ghastly

Saint Theresa, in one of her autobiographical sketches, says that she was shown her own self, on one occasion of introspection, not as she was wont to view it, but as it was in naked reality, and she could never after recall the vision without a shudder.

Who sees himself as he is? Who wishes to do so? Who would not be offended were you to exhibit to his eyes a picture of himself as he is? No one likes his own photograph, for the sun does not flatter. But no photographs have yet been taken of man's interior self; if they were, no one would consent to look on his own; he would spend all his fortune in buying up the copies and destroying the plates.

We are accustomed to view ourselves as those do who stand on the Brocken, magnified a thousand fold, with rainbow haloes about our heads. I have known a little fellow, who reached my elbow, strut with infinite consequence and gesticulate with tragic dignity on the Brocken, before his own shadow projected on a cloud, nimbus-girded, and vast as the All-Father of Norse mytho-

logy. A breath of wind passed, and the phantom vanished. But we carry our Brocken shadow about with us everywhere, and posture to it, and look up to it with an awe and admiration that slides into worship ; and very rarely does the cold east wind sweep it away. But there remains this consolation to the Brocken shadow worshipper, that when the phantom form disappears, *nothing* remains behind, and it is a satisfaction, a poor one, but still a satisfaction, when the blast has dispelled our ideal self before which we have bowed, to discover behind it simple nonentity. There would be disenchantment indeed, and a graver walk, and a more subdued voice, and a less self-asserting tone, but there would not be that exquisite, that annihilating horror that ensues when the scattering of the vapour discloses a reality the reverse at every point of what we had imagined.

In the Egyptian temples hung purple curtains embroidered with gold, and censers perpetually smoked before the veil, and golden lamps, ever burning, diffused a

mellow light through the sacred enclosure. What was behind that pictured spangled veil, within the holy of holies? Sometimes a hippopotamus wallowing on straw—or a chattering crane—sometimes Nothing. We are engaged all our lives in the erection of magnificent temples about ourselves, and in embroidering gold-besprent curtains, and in the burning of frankincense, and in the kindling and feeding of lamps, in these tabernacles; and what is behind the veil? Do we know? Do we ever look? We paint and plate with gold ideal representations of the god within on the propylæum of our temple, but what resemblance does this figure bear to the reality? Do we know? Do we care to know? Will we not rather put out our eyes than compare them? If, by chance, a sudden gleam of sun, a puff of pure air, stir the curtain and reveal the mystery, with what haste we fly to duplicate the veils, to blind the windows, to nail the curtains to the gilded sideposts, and weight them with lead. How we redouble our prostrations, and make more dense the cloud of incense;

how we elaborate our ceremonial, and when the hippopotamus within yawns, or the ibis chatters, we clash our symbals, boom our drums, peal our trumpets to drown the utterance of the god.

There was in Alexandria no god like unto Serapis, whose temple was the wonder of the world. But one day an impious hand struck off the head, and out of the gilded idol rushed a legion of rats. There is no god, no idol, like the ideal self within the veil ; but it does not chance to every one as it chanced to Giles Inglett Saltren, to have its head knocked off and see the vermin scamper out of it. When that does happen, that is a moment never to be forgotten. It is a moment of infinite importance in the life-history, it is a moment determinative of the future. The worshippers of Serapis, after that terrible spectacle, which was also extremely laughable, stood in consternation ; and at that moment stood also at the fork of two roads. Either they shuffled off to the left, with their hands in their pockets, damning all religion, and vowing they would believe in nothing

thenceforth, or they moved with firm steps along the right-hand road that led to a truer faith.

The same takes place with us when the Serapis of our ideal self is broken and reveals the nest of rats within. Either our moral nature becomes disintegrated, and breaks down utterly and irremediably into unsightly débris, or we turn from the worship of ourselves to seek elsewhere our ideal, and looking to it, attain to a nobler, more generous, an altruistic life.

Mr. James Welsh had not spared Jingles ; he had told him plainly, even coarsely, what he thought of him, but no words of his could express the intensity of the sense of infamy that Giles Inglett felt. For a moment he had been stunned, numbed as hand and foot become numbed for awhile, and then with a tingling and needle-pricking, the moral juices began once more to flow, and the agony of inner pain he felt was the pledge of moral recovery.

As soon as Giles Inglett Saltren began to consider what were the consequences drawn

upon him and Arminell by his folly, an almost overpowering desire came over him to fly from England. He had sufficient money to pay his passage across the Atlantic, and to maintain him in a new world till he could obtain a suitable situation. In a new world he might begin life anew, leaving behind his old follies and faults, and make a smooth table of the past. In the old world he could do nothing to remedy what he had wrought ; but he put the temptation from him. He saw that to yield to it would be an act of cowardice, and would result in moral ruin. Instinctively, without self-analysis, he reached the conclusion that a single course lay open before him if he were to save his moral self from wreck. The same moment that he became conscious of this, he stood up, and hailed a passing empty hansom.

That moment saw the beginning of a new life in him ; new ends, new visions rose before his eyes.

Thus it was that Giles Inglett Saltren entered the sitting-room where his uncle was engaged with Arminell, and thus it was that

he entered it a very different man from what Mr. Welsh had described him.

“How came you here?” asked the journalist. “Did not I tell you to remain in Hyde Park till you were wanted?”

“I have come,” answered Giles firmly, “to speak to Miss Inglett. I have a just duty to perform to her, to clear her mind of the clouds I have brought over it. Miss Inglett, I was utterly wrong in supposing that his lordship was—was—what I let you believe him to be, my father. I did him a grievous wrong, I imagined it possible that the best and most blameless of men had been guilty of the basest conduct. And now that your father is dead—”

“Dead!” echoed Arminell.

Saltren looked at his uncle. He had supposed that Welsh had broken the news to the girl.

“Yes,” said he, and his voice, which before was firm, gave way for a moment. “Your father is dead.”

“Dead!” again repeated Arminell, and put her hands to her brow. She was being

stunned by repeated blows, as Saltren had been stunned. “Dead ! Impossible.”

“Miss Inglett, it is as well that you should know all, and know it at once, for action must be taken immediately. Your father has met with an accident—he has been found dead after a fall. I shall return immediately by the express to Orleigh. I go to my mother at Chillacot. You must allow my uncle at once to escort you to Lady Hermione ; place yourself under her protection, and confide to her all the particulars of your leaving home. I will see Lady Lamerton, and she shall telegraph to you at Lady Hermione’s to return to the Park. I will wire at once, in your name, to your mother, to send your lady’s-maid to you at your aunt’s in Portland Place. Your maid will find you there, and attend you home to Orleigh. It is possible that by this means your running away from home with me may remain unknown. You left Orleigh on Saturday, by to-night your maid will be with you in Portland Place, and I shall be seen this evening at Orleigh, where I shall make

it a point of showing myself. It is therefore not likely that suspicions of my ever having left may arise. There is no time to be lost. You will hear, all too soon, the particulars of your father's death—about myself I will not speak. I should be ashamed to say a word in self-justification, and my self-reproach is beyond the power of words to express."

Arminell turned herself about, as though rotating on a pivot, holding her temples with both hands, and elbows extended:

"Yes," said Mr. Welsh, "this is well considered. Giles, it shall be as you say. I will take Miss Inglett at once to Portland Place, unless she prefers that I should go to her ladyship, and prepare her; and then Miss Inglett can follow. That probably will be the least painful course."

Arminell still swung herself from side to side. She was pale as ashes, and her eyes full of trouble and terror.

"I will go home directly, uncle," said Giles. "I have acted not like a fool only, but wickedly, and I must face the consequences."

Arminell remained stationary, and released her temples.

“What was that you said?” she asked.

“As I have been guilty, not of indiscretion only, but of a crime,” said he, gravely, “I must face the consequences, be they what they may.” Then Arminell drew a long breath. She recovered her composure for a moment. She recalled what had been her judgment on her father when she thought him guilty.

“I also,” she said, and her voice was harsh, “I also have been guilty, not of folly only, but of a crime. I have sinned against my dear, dear father. I will not go to my Aunt Hermione. I will not go back to Orleigh.”

“But the repentant prodigal,” said Welsh, “in the Gospel story did return.”

“When the father was at home to receive him,” answered Arminell, sharply. “There is not—” She drew another long breath; and then said, “I also will face the consequences.”

